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Tuesday 23 November 2010

Mardi 23 novembre 2010

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 23 November 2010

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 23 novembre 2010

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the Baha'i prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

NARCOTICS SAFETY AND AWARENESS ACT, 2010 LOI DE 2010 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ ET LA SENSIBILISATION EN MATIÈRE DE STUPÉFIANTS

Ms. Smith, on behalf of Ms. Matthews, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 101, An Act to provide for monitoring the prescribing and dispensing of certain controlled substances / Projet de loi 101, Loi prévoyant la surveillance des activités liées à la prescription et à la préparation de certaines substances désignées.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Debate?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I'll be sharing my time with the member from Guelph.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm very pleased to be able to address the Legislature this morning on the third reading of our government's proposed Narcotics Safety and Awareness Act.

I am absolutely convinced that this act, if passed, would save lives and protect individuals and families from the effects of the misuse of prescription narcotics and controlled substances.

At the same time, our goal with this proposed legislation is to restore the balance between providing appropriate pain treatment for those who need it, while preventing misuse, abuse and addiction. Our government took prompt action to address the misuse and abuse of prescription narcotics and other controlled substances with the introduction of this legislation.

Let me remind members of the serious crisis that is hurting families across Ontario and that has prompted our government to act.

Individuals, families, and indeed entire communities across Ontario have been devastated by this epidemic in the overuse of drugs containing oxycodone or other narcotics. These drugs can lead to addiction in the most unlikely people and in the most mundane of circumstances.

It's shocking, even shameful, for people and their families to discover that they are addicted to prescription painkillers.

People suffer from the stigma attached to drug addiction, the loss of self-esteem and self-reliance, and in the most extreme cases, the loss of family, friends and other community connections. Feeding their drug habit becomes the central focus of addicted people's lives, and some resort to crime to support their addiction.

Prescription narcotics have become a highly lucrative street drug, resulting in widespread diversion from legal use into trafficking by individuals and organized crime groups. That means more pharmacy robberies, more violence and more drug trafficking, with all its related negative effects on communities all across Ontario.

Overuse and misuse also means higher rates of addiction and admittance to treatment centres, where admissions have doubled between 2004 and 2008. This in turn places additional pressure on the province's 150 substance abuse treatment programs.

The abuse of prescription narcotics or painkillers has emerged as a public safety issue in jurisdictions around the world. These drugs are being overprescribed, they are being overused and they are being obtained illegally and sold on the street for profit while the people who buy them are getting sick and are dying.

Canada is one of the world's top per capita users of prescription narcotics, and in Canada, Ontario is regrettably at the very top of the list of narcotic use on a per capita basis. You've heard the statistics before, but they are worth repeating: Since 1991, prescriptions for medications containing oxycodone have risen by 900%; that's a ninefold increase over the level it was just a few years ago. The Ministry of Health spent \$156 million on 3.9 million prescriptions for narcotics for Ontario drug benefit program recipients alone in just one year, 2009-10. That's an average annual cost of \$260 per person taking narcotic painkillers. This equates to an average of over six prescriptions per person on these drugs, and that tells you that some individuals have a very high number of prescriptions indeed.

One of the groups most affected is First Nations. In fact, a majority of Ontario's First Nation communities, including the Chiefs of Ontario, has declared a state of emergency over the abuse of prescription narcotics, particularly drugs containing oxycodone. The Matawa Chiefs also express growing concern about the development of an underground economy, with drug dealers targeting their communities and with rising crime. But I don't want

to suggest that this is uniquely a First Nation problem. In reality, it's a rising problem everywhere in Ontario.

There is overwhelming agreement from all of our parties and stakeholders, including the all-party Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, on which I was pleased to serve, that there is a public health crisis around the misuse and abuse of prescription narcotics and that immediate action is required. When the select committee toured the province we dropped into all sorts of communities, but in particular we visited First Nation communities in northern Ontario and in eastern and southwestern Ontario. We heard the same thing wherever we went: that the misuse of prescription painkillers had become a huge problem. We also heard that in our more formal hearings in other communities throughout the province, and that was why, when the select committee made its recommendations, this is the only recommendation where we said, "Government, you must act immediately in terms of putting in place some sort of means of addressing this outbreak of addiction to prescription narcotics." Our government took immediate action, as asked, with the introduction of this proposed legislation along with the broader narcotics strategy.

A key element of the narcotics strategy is the development of our narcotics database, which will capture all prescription information for these drugs dispensed in Ontario. The support for the development of this database has been overwhelming. Right now, an individual can go to 20 different physicians, obtain 20 different prescriptions for narcotics, bill those prescriptions at 20 pharmacies, pay cash and no one will ever know. Well, the Ministry of Health needs to know. It needs to be able to monitor and analyze this information to inform educational initiatives and to identify patterns of inappropriate prescribing, dispensing and use. But most importantly, we need to be able to provide this information at the point of care, where patients are actually receiving health care.

0910

As a start, the database will inform the pharmacist. When the pharmacist goes to fill a narcotic prescription, they will actually be able to see whether there are a number of other outstanding prescriptions and whether there is abuse of the drug by this particular patient. Eventually, with additional technology in place, prescribers—that is, doctors, nurse practitioners, dentists, anyone who is authorized under the law to prescribe prescription narcotics—will also have access to the patient's profile so that they too can assess whether to prescribe these medications. So we'll be able to get the information to people at the point where they're making a decision about whether or not to prescribe. Obviously, if there's abuse, then we know that our health practitioners will choose not to prescribe but rather to find out how to intervene in the problem.

The database lays the necessary foundation to ensure the success of the whole strategy. If this legislation is passed, the ministry is expecting to completely enhance the database by summer of 2011.

Following second reading, Bill 101 was referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy. The committee received over 40 submissions, which identified the following key issues: the need for an appropriate balance between privacy protection and public safety; the need for a provincial chronic pain strategy; and increased access to treatment of addictions.

I'd like the members to note that the ministry already collects information on narcotic prescription for Ontario drug benefit or ODB recipients. At this point, we are obviously collecting the information for the purpose of paying the pharmacists who have dispensed the drugs. We are able to disclose this information to law enforcement agencies and regulatory colleges, as authorized under the Personal Health Information Protection Act.

The technology and privacy protections already exist in legislation, and the provisions of the proposed legislation would build upon those systems that are already in place. During committee, we heard from some stakeholders that there should be mandatory disclosure to regulatory colleges and law enforcement agencies in certain circumstances. But we also heard from other stakeholders that no disclosure should occur without a consultation process with the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

Our proposed legislation clearly outlines what information can be collected, to whom personal health information can be disclosed and under what circumstances. The act would extend the ministry's authority to cover all Ontarians rather than simply limiting it to ODB recipients, which is currently the case, for prescriptions for narcotics and controlled substances. The only disclosure provision in addition to what currently exists would be to prescribers, dispensers and operators of pharmacies.

Secondly, with respect to the chronic pain strategy, while there is no specific pain strategy embedded in the narcotics strategy, there are areas that relate to the treatment of chronic pain. For example, a key focus of the strategy is the development of education for health care professionals, which will include education on appropriate pain management and the appropriate use of narcotic painkillers.

The Narcotics Advisory Panel to the Ministry of Health has a long-term mandate to provide advice to government on optimal pain management; and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is working to establish a group of experts in the field of chronic pain, including physicians and other providers, to develop evidence-based recommendations for chronic pain management. This advice will inform a strategy to organize and deliver more effective treatment and management programs for those people who have chronic pain issues.

Considering all the submissions, we feel that we need to balance the issue of privacy of personal health information with the need to deal with the major public health crisis that is killing individuals and destroying families and communities across the province. We do not take this lightly, and with this proposed legislation I feel that we have struck the right balance.

The data is only part of our overall provincial narcotics strategy. We will also raise public awareness about safety, including youth education; we will incorporate more narcotic and pain management education into the medical school curriculum; and we will work to educate prescribers and pharmacists about the appropriate use and dispensing of prescription narcotics.

The broader strategy will also focus on treating patients with addiction, and investigating additional options for treating and supporting those addicted to prescription narcotics and controlled substances. The strategy will also develop educational workshops on the treatment of narcotics dependence and support the work with relevant partner treatment and addiction organizations and agencies, including the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and ConnexOntario.

At the clause-by-clause reading on October 26, 2010, several amendments were made to the bill, as follows: Firstly, hospitals will be included within the narcotics database once the technology allows for it and a clear implementation strategy has been determined in consultation with hospitals. Again, we know from our conversations with the select committee that one of the points of abuse of narcotics is that sometimes people will shop emergency rooms looking for prescription painkillers, so it's important that we include hospitals in the information loop.

Secondly, the act would specify that the executive officer of the provincial drug program would co-operate with other organizations, specifically including regulatory colleges, to achieve the purposes of the act, if passed.

Finally, we made amendments providing authority for the minister and/or the executive officer to disclose information to prescribers at the point of prescribing, if the act is passed. I mentioned earlier how making sure that the prescriber has information about all the patient's narcotics prescriptions at the time they are making the decision to treat the patient is very important, so that the prescriber, i.e., the treating physician or the treating dentist, the treating nurse practitioner, understands the prescription narcotic history of the patient as they're making the decision around what sort of drugs to prescribe. The latter amendment allowing access to the prescription will therefore help to determine whether to prescribe a narcotic or controlled substance.

Originally, the bill only allowed for disclosure to a prescriber who had already prescribed a narcotic or controlled substance to the person, and we thought it made much more sense to allow physicians to see the information before they make that decision, when they can actually then choose more effective courses for managing pain.

Our government is focused on helping individuals, families and communities avoid in the first instance and recover from the effect of prescription drug misuse and abuse. As a government, we feel that we need to take strong action to turn the tide. That's what we're doing with this legislation and with our broader strategy. We

need the support of every member for our proposed Narcotics Safety and Awareness Act to make this happen, and I ask all three parties to support this proposed legislation in Bill 101.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I did listen with interest to the comments made by the member from Guelph with respect to Bill 101, and certainly we are intending to support this bill. But having said that, we have to recognize that this is only one small part of a very, very big problem.

Being a fellow member of the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, we did have the opportunity to visit many communities across Ontario that are really being ravaged by prescription drug abuse of oxycodone products, OxyContin and Percocet being subsets of that. We know that while the registry is really an important part of the process to be able to hopefully stop the process of double-doctoring and having people visit multiple physicians and multiple pharmacies to obtain these products, there are many more things that need to be done.

The select committee did take a very hard look at this particular issue. We urged the Minister of Health to act immediately, and we do thank her for her efforts in this respect, but there is a lot more that needs to be done in terms of treatment, in terms of giving people the opportunity to get themselves off these drugs. There are some law enforcement issues that need to be looked at. In terms of treatment, there's a lot more to be done to make sure that there's a basket of services in each community, because there are many parts of Ontario where detoxification programs and support programs simply aren't available. When you look particularly in the north, in some of our First Nations communities the situation is so bad that up to 70% of the population is suffering from prescription drug abuse. So we really need to concentrate our efforts and move on and start implementing other parts of the program in addition to this very worthwhile initiative.

0920

We look forward to working with the government on developing the response to this. It is something that is needed in all parts of the province.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Certainly we agree with the premise of what we're trying to do, but allow me to take a few exceptions. When I hear my colleague talk about, "Anybody could go to 20 different doctors and then to 20 different pharmacies and nobody would know"—this, to me, who comes from northern Ontario, is like a speech from another planet. People in Sudbury and people in northern Ontario—35,000 of them don't have access to a primary care provider, a physician or a nurse practitioner. If you can get to see your primary care physician within a month or five weeks, you are lucky. This is a bill that has been brought together to help, basically, people in south-

ern Ontario and people in large urban areas deal with prescription use and abuse. It is not a bill that is conducive to helping the people in northern, rural, First Nations, remote communities.

I represent rural northern Ontario. We don't have 20 physicians, and we don't have 20 pharmacies. What the bill will be good at doing is something that is completely inappropriate for the people of the north, and this is something that I will go into more detail on later. The use and abuse of OxyContin and opioids has reached alarming rates in the regions that I represent, in First Nations, in rural Ontario, yet we are coming with a bill that has good intentions and good objectives but really works on only one tiny part of this. This is the putting together of a database that, frankly, is not going to help us a whole lot.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments?

Mr. Jeff Leal: Today you've heard some very articulate comments from the member from Guelph, along with the members from Whitby–Oshawa and Nickel Belt. We all had the opportunity to serve on the select committee for mental health services in the province of Ontario. Bill 101 is a piece of the puzzle, a building block.

I particularly recall, as the member from Whitby–Oshawa just made note of, our visit to Sandy Lake, which is a very isolated First Nations community in northwestern Ontario, only accessible by air and water in the summertime and by ice roads in the wintertime. The chief and his band council went to great lengths to describe to us the very appalling situation where Percocet and OxyContin were smuggled into that community from Winnipeg. The chief went to great lengths to provide, as best they could, a screening process to try to reduce the flow of those two prescription drugs.

Certainly, there's no question that a lot more needs to be done. This is a start: an electronic database to collect, monitor and analyze information related to prescription narcotics and controlled substances.

While I'm on my feet today, I would really like to express our condolences to the Richardson family. Mr. Richardson played junior hockey for the Peterborough Petes. He just lost his daughter very tragically in the last couple of weeks as a result of a 14-year-old committing suicide. That's something we all heard about during our deliberations, and it goes to show you that all of us, all three parties in this chamber, have a solemn obligation to do what we can in this field.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments and questions?

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to provide a small comment on the opening address by the member for Guelph. I've listened to some of the responses and comments from some of the other members.

I just want to highlight one of the statements. The member for Nickel Belt mentioned that there have been some good intentions by this initial bill, Bill 101. However, there's such a larger picture that has yet to be tackled.

Certainly, mental health and addictions has been a topic of great interest in my riding. I have the Brockville

Mental Health Centre, which is being moved, for all intents and purposes, up to Ottawa, to the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre, through that group.

In constituency week, I had a mental health seminar on October 15, on the Friday. I asked the member for Whitby–Oshawa and the member for Dufferin–Caledon, who were members from our caucus of that all-party committee, to come and speak. I was really impressed with the number of people from the mental health and addictions field and from the education field, and just interested members of the community, who came out that day to talk about the recommendations from the all-party committee.

I think some members of the public were a bit surprised when the two members from my caucus who were on that committee talked about the co-operation that we had between all members of this Legislature, of all parties, of every political stripe. I think that really changed the whole opportunity there.

What I'm trying to say is that we have so much more that we can do, and we're looking to the government on sort of the next plans and the next steps that they have as part of that report.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Guelph has two minutes to respond.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'd like to thank the members for Whitby–Oshawa, Nickel Belt, Peterborough and Leeds–Grenville for their comments.

Certainly, I want to recognize that the government understands that Bill 101 is just a piece, and that's why in my remarks I talked about the broader narcotics strategy, understanding that the response to the whole problem of addiction to prescription narcotics is much broader than simply tracking the use on a database.

We understand that we need to work with physicians, pharmacists, nurse practitioners and all those folks around the province who are health care providers on educating about best practice in terms of how we manage pain and what is appropriate use of prescription narcotics.

The reason that the database—the collection of and disclosure of data—is the item that is dealt with in Bill 101 is because that's the only part of the narcotics strategy where we actually require legislative change, where we require the legislative authority to collect the information about prescriptions for narcotics that are made for people other than those people who are on Ontario drug benefit. At the moment, we only collect, as a government, information about the prescriptions that we're going to pay for, for the people on the Ontario drug benefit, so we need the legal authority to go beyond what we're currently collecting. That's why the database focus in Bill 101.

Certainly, there's a whole lot of other things that need to be done, and we will do them.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Before we continue, I'd like to recognize Dr. Bob Frankford, the former member for Scarborough East in the 35th Parliament. Welcome.

M^{me} France Gélinas: On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I believe we have unanimous consent to switch

the order of the leads, with the third party lead going ahead of the official opposition lead.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Agreed? Thank you.

Please continue.

0930

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As was mentioned, I was one of the members on the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, and we all know that bringing forward the quick action on the use and misuse of narcotics was one of the recommendations of the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions in its report. The ministry acted on that recommendation with this, Bill 101, and the previous member went to some length to explain what this bill is trying to do. I would like to spend the first part of my time talking about some of the issues that were not part of the bill, although, through committee, we tried to bring modifications to the bill and bring motions forward that were not in it. That continues, to this day, to bring me quite a bit of angst, as to, this bill has the potential to not do exactly what we wanted it to, plus to do some harm in the process.

The first thing that is really troublesome to me is the regulatory college/privacy issue. What do I mean by this? Well, the bill creates an unprecedented search and seizure provision that we have never seen in Ontario before. Ontario has colleges, so whether you are a physician, a dentist, a nurse practitioner or a physiotherapist, you belong to a college. Your college exists to protect the public and basically has the tools in place to investigate their members. This is how we have always done health professional investigations. Now, through this bill—as I say, the bill goes in the right direction. The bill has good intentions and good objectives. But through the bill, for reasons that are still unknown to me, we are creating those people, positions, who will be allowed to go into any physician's office, any dental office, any nurse practitioner—anybody who has the right to prescribe a narcotic, those new positions, those people will be allowed to go in. This is something worrisome to me. I don't understand why we didn't work through the college, why we had to put forward those new positions in a bill.

So those people will come into, let's say, a physician's office. They have the right to summon medical charts: patients' records. There is nothing in the bill that says how long those charts will be gone for and where they are going to take them. If things work like in some other areas of the ministry, it could take six weeks before we see them again. This has a direct impact on patient care, as those patients may very well go back to see their providers during that period of time. At the end of the day, the provider—my example was physicians—has to co-operate, but here, again, this has not been defined. Is a physician who is doing a procedure in an examination room, saying, "You'll have to wait a few minutes," going to be seen as not co-operative?

I can speak for physicians, nurse practitioners and dentists in northern Ontario: When you look at the stats,

we have one physician for 5,400 people. You look in the GTA and there's one physician for 350. Do you figure physicians in northern Ontario are busy? Absolutely. Their caseload is full. Their agendas are full. So if this person drops in at 2 o'clock in the afternoon and you have a waiting room full of people who have come from great distances to see that physician that day, and then you can't really give this bureaucrat enough time, are you going to be labelled as not co-operative, or are you going to tell the people who have travelled often over 100 kilometres, waited for five weeks to come and see you, "I'm sorry, you're have to come again. Your sick baby will have to wait"? This is very troublesome. Why didn't we work through the college? They have provisions in place. They have done this before. They have disciplined their members. They know how to do this in a way that brings results that are respectful of the clients that we're trying to serve. All of this was pushed aside. I don't understand why this was put into the law.

When I brought those issues forward during clause-by-clause, I got non-answers. This is something that is there. They modified it a wee bit, but this is something that will stay, and nobody can explain to me why we could not respect the college that was already there. We have self-regulation in Ontario. As far as I'm concerned, it works well. Why we didn't build upon this will continue to be a mystery to me.

The second piece that is really troublesome to me is that when the minister first introduced the bill, she talked about how they had worked at length with the privacy commissioner because, let's think about it, it is a serious issue of privacy. A medication that your doctor, your dentist or your nurse practitioner has prescribed to you will now be knowledge that the government will have access to. They will have access to who the prescriber—your physician—is, who you are, what medication you got, in what dosage, how many repeats. This is the type of information that currently is not shared with the government, but through this bill, because we're trying to do something good here and we're trying to get a hold of narcotic misuse and overuse, we are really looking into sharing private medical issues with the government in a way that we've never done before.

The minister stood up and told us that a lot of her work had to do with sitting down with the privacy commissioner to make sure that we have this right. I was really comforted by this. But then the privacy commissioner came and made a presentation and wrote a letter that more or less said completely the opposite: She still has serious concerns about the way this bill will impact the privacy of sensitive medical health information of Ontarians. So this level of comfort that I had—because that was one of the first things that came out of the minister's mouth when she talked about this bill, and then we have the privacy commissioner herself standing in front of committee and telling us pretty much the opposite, that she still has great concerns, and writing us a letter outlining those concerns in black and white. When we tried to bring forward motions to address this,

we were ruled out of order—anyway, it didn't work. So the concerns that the privacy commissioner had are still there.

We all agree that the problem of narcotic abuse is complex, that it requires a multi-pronged approach and that there is a pervasive concern regarding whether Bill 101 will be effective in doing what it sets out to do. So when I hear about the privacy commissioner, I'm worried, and those worries are still there; they have not been addressed. We've tried to make changes. Those changes did not go through. The privacy commissioner is somebody who knows a thing or two about privacy. I tend to respect her opinion. Here we have an opinion from a member that really goes against what the Minister of Health had told us, and that continues to be worrisome to me.

0940

We also have the idea that the bill, although it is really targeted at narcotics, includes other substances. Not only will we have a list of narcotics included in this database for which people will have to share the information with the government, but any other substances could be targeted and included in this act. This also makes me really worried. It makes me worried for many reasons. The first one is that we have one example here in Ontario, right here, right now, of a medication that has been proven effective in its own right but that comes with a whole series of bureaucratic rules. That's methadone. It is so complicated to prescribe methadone in Ontario that very few physicians bother with it at all. You really have to be dedicated to wanting to help the addicts get off of their addiction before you go through the process of prescribing methadone in the way that it has been bureaucratically managed.

Here, we are bringing about a substantive bureaucratic process that will oversee and govern the way narcotics are prescribed. But then the bill doesn't stop at narcotics; it includes other substances. Here again, I'm not sure I was ever given a good reason as to why we have to go beyond narcotics. I was also not given any good reason as to why some of the other substances had already been put in there.

If you want quality care, let health care providers use their clinical judgment to say the best way to achieve quality care for a given patient. To come with a whole bunch of pre-set rules is not any way to lead to quality care. At the end of the day, a good relationship between a primary care provider and their patient—show them the decency of respecting their skills at what they do and deciding what is in the best interests of that patient, given all of their knowledge, given all of the best practices that exist and given the facts of the real live person in front of them. This is how you achieve quality care.

I understand that because of the situation we are in with the misuse and abuse of narcotics, we had to do something, and I don't deny that. But to put in the act that other medications—"other substances," actually, is I think what they use—could be added to this act is troublesome to me.

Some medication, some substance that has fallen out of favour for one reason, that finds its way to the front page of the papers for all the wrong reasons that have nothing to do with quality care, nothing to do with good primary care practice, will suddenly find its way onto this new database, with very little we will be able to do about it. It's not going to come back and have an open debate in this House. It's going to be a complete change in regulations. The government will be able to—I agree that they will have to go through consultations, but, frankly, with a majority government, they never have to listen to any of those consultations. Sometimes, they set out to do something and it doesn't matter how many people raise their voices, how many concerns are brought forward. They just plow ahead and do whatever they want to do.

Here we have, in this bill, this provision that is troublesome to me. I have brought that forward during second reading, during clause-by-clause. I didn't get satisfaction on that and certainly was not able to move the government on that. Those are some of the concerns that I have.

Another huge area of concern—and these people were really, really vocal in coming and explaining to us what this would do—is the whole issue of chronic pain management. Narcotics are a treatment of choice for many with chronic pain. When they are used in the proper way and monitored in the proper way, they can do wonders. They can change people's lives. People who can't sleep, can't work, can't function anymore are given a second chance at life. They can sleep better; they can heal; they can work again; they can function. They can have happy, productive lives because their chronic pain is under control. We already know that when you add a layer of bureaucracy by adding this database, which we all say is there for a good reason, it will have an effect on people trying to seek control of their chronic pain.

I can speak to hundreds of calls that I took, when I was the executive director of the community health centre, from people who had gone through the traditional system of getting physiotherapy and trying to manage their pain. They had finally found the right combination of drugs and exercise and relaxation and acupuncture and all of this that worked, but one piece of that management was the prescription of a narcotic. Then they find themselves, like a million Ontarians, without access to primary care. They lose their family physician, they lose their link to a prescriber, so they depend on walk-ins, on emergency rooms, on anything they can find to get the same management that had worked well for them. But now nobody will prescribe narcotics to them. They go back into the hell that they were in before. That's no way to treat people with chronic pain.

First of all, why is it that Ontario doesn't have a chronic pain management strategy? Many other provinces in this country do, and it is effective and it works; but here we are bringing forward a bill that is squarely targeted at access. It will make access to narcotics a whole lot more difficult, for all of the good reasons that we've already stated, to look at misuse and abuse, but for

people who legitimately need access to those medications it will also make life hell. There is nothing in this bill that will help the hundreds of thousands of Ontarians—I think it's scheduled to be 2.4 million Ontarians—who deal with chronic pain. Not all of them use narcotics, but a good percentage of them do. We will make access for those 2.4 million Ontarians a whole lot more difficult, with nothing to counterbalance this. How do you balance this? You balance this by bringing forward a good strategy for pain management for Ontarians.

We had stellar deputations on this particular topic. Heads of departments came forward and talked to us about how we could have good chronic pain management in Ontario: "Here are some live examples that work, right here in Ontario"—most of them chronically underfunded, but they manage to pull it together anyway.

Here's how it works in other provinces. Here's how you bring the balance, because let's not kid ourselves: If your life is being overtaken by pain, you will do anything. You will self-treat, either at the LCBO or by street drugs. You will do whatever you can to control your pain. When good pain management is not available to you, doing nothing is not an option, because living with pain day in and day out is not living. Those people need help.

0950

Here we have a bill that will seriously decrease those people's already limited access to treatment, and we have nothing on the flipside to help them. Does anybody in Ontario ever think that because you don't have access to this drug that you are depending on, because the access is gone, your addiction will suddenly disappear? That because you don't have access to a medication that you're addicted to, problem solved, the addiction will go away? Absolutely not. When those people don't have access to those narcotics, their dependence will still be there. They will still be addicted and they will search. They will search like only an addict can search for the next hit, for the next time he can get his hands on that drug—his or her. What does that mean? That means that the demand for black market narcotics goes through the roof. That means that if there's another drug available, they will switch to another drug. But it doesn't mean that we have solved any problems; it just means that we have shifted it. We shift it to the underground; we shift it to the black market; we shift it to another type of substance or drug.

To be effective, all of those steps have to be done together. Not only do you have to decrease access, but you also have to provide treatment. Now, we already know that the 100-and-some—130, I think—addiction treatment programs all have huge waiting lists. I can speak to northern Ontario, where it will take you six months to get your first appointment to say, "Yes, you qualify," and about a year and a half before you will start your treatment, because of the wait-lists. And that depends on your age group and if you fit into the program and if you are a First Nation or—anyway, it doesn't matter who you are; the story is not going to be, we take away your supply of narcotics and we help you deal with your ad-

diction. It will be, we take away your supply of narcotics and we leave you there with no help for weeks and probably months—and for some of them, years—to fend for yourself with an addiction that is almost impossible to get out of by yourself. You will need help. You will need help. You will need help. Unfortunately, we're only doing the first part: We're taking away the supply, with nothing coming in to say that we will help the hundreds of thousands of people who presently live with an addiction. The reason why we are putting this forward is because we have so many people in Ontario addicted to those drugs that it has motivated the government to do something, yet we're taking away the supply and leaving you there to fend for yourself—not exactly what I had in mind.

Coming back to the people dealing with chronic pain, there's very little specialty training for pain management, so we have very few pain management specialists here in Ontario. Although health professionals try to do the best they can, very few of them are able to offer quality care best built on the evidence-informed decision-making that we want to see. The government does acknowledge this in their narcotics strategy announcement. They say that there is a need for additional education and collaboration between health professionals, but that's all. We have not yet heard anything about putting an emphasis on chronic pain management. I would say, go to Alberta, Nova Scotia or Quebec. They all have chronic pain management strategies. Their strategies are very similar. There are best practices developing out there. But not for Ontario. So people with chronic pain will stand to go through a really tough go when this bill comes into effect. I have no doubt that some physicians who are already very reluctant to prescribe those drugs will become even more reluctant, and people with chronic pain will be left with no help. We all know that this is the consequence of this bill. Why aren't we more proactive in saying, yes, we know this is there; yes, we realize that chronic pain management is the way to solve this; and, yes, we will do something about it, like those witnesses, so many of them, came and told us? But, no, none of this is being done.

The CPSO, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, has done a very good report. It's called *Avoiding Abuse, Achieving a Balance: Tackling the Opioid Public Health Crisis*. In their report, they make 31 recommendations. They talk about the need for a comprehensive strategy that deals not only with supply and access but also deals with the patients. They also deal with what that will mean for the people of Ontario—what does that mean for chronic pain? What does that mean for people who have addiction, and how do we deal with this—looking into every facet of the program. It's very well done, and I want to congratulate the College of Physicians and Surgeons for putting forward that public health paper.

Unfortunately, we are only looking at this tiny little piece of it. We're looking at this database; we're looking at the supply side; and the rest of it more or less falls apart.

As was mentioned, the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions spent quite a bit of time looking at addictions services. In our report, *Navigating the Journey to Wellness: The Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan for Ontarians*—we travelled for 18 months. We held 30 days of hearings; 230 presenters came, and we read 300 submissions.

We know that the province has 150 service providers for addictions services, but in spite of this, we still have so many Ontarians who cannot gain access. This is all documented in our document; this is all documented in the College of Physicians and Surgeons document; and this is all being completely ignored by this government as they move forward with Bill 101. We did try to be heard. People came and presented, but very few of the recommendations that were made for change were acted upon, and even fewer of them were accepted.

There are some huge variances from region to region in Ontario. Some of them are desperate, but none of them are doing very well, so the idea that we could re-shift resources is a non-starter. There are no areas in the province where people with an addiction can get the help they need, right here, right now, in a way that is close to their home, that is conducive to supporting them in their recovery. Some of them try. Some of them do a very good job with the resources that they have. But they all have long waiting lists.

I also want to talk about health professionals' education. A rather interesting fact that was presented to us shows that physicians receive an average of 16 hours of pain education. Physicians who have gone through the standard training in one of the recognized faculties of medicine in Ontario will have received 16 hours of pain education. That doesn't seem like much if you compare this to the 87 hours that the veterinarian students get. I take it that managing pain within animals is more important than managing pain within people—this despite the fact that any GP, any nurse practitioner will tell you that one of the main reasons people come to see them is pain. If you go to the dentist, who also has the right to prescribe, and ask them how many of their clients have come because they have pain, the statistic goes through the roof. People unfortunately don't always go to the dentist when they should; they go to the dentist when they can't stand the pain anymore. So although people do go and seek help because of pain, there's very little that is being taught.

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“Since the early 1990s, family physicians have been inundated with materials and information from pharmaceutical companies about the value of using opioids for ... effective pain management. This education was largely focused on the potential benefits” of those drugs “and failed to include education about the potential risks, including misuse, addiction and diversion. There was also little attention paid to the importance of appropriate goal-setting, screening, monitoring for safety and effectiveness and protocols for tapering or discontinuing opioids. As a result of issues stemming from misprescrib-

ing and other problems, some”—and I would say many—“physicians have stopped prescribing opioids” altogether for chronic pain or for any other reason. “This has resulted in some patients being undertreated while other physicians continue to prescribe inappropriately.

“Education, based on the best available evidence, delivered from non-commercial sources”—so not from the pharmaceutical industry—“is paramount in helping all health professionals deal effectively with chronic non-cancer pain, including the effective and safe use of opioid medication.”

Chronic pain management needs to be approached in the same way that chronic disease management is: long-term planning and goal-setting. Primary care providers need the educational training, and they also need access to retraining, to determine whether opioids are appropriate, so that they can screen for the risk of misuse and set realistic goals in collaboration with their patients.

Currently, there is no comprehensive continuing education system for health care providers in Ontario, and it's estimated that 50% of that is delivered by pharmaceutical companies. The CPSO and other colleges are working to develop standards of ongoing education, but they need the government's support. So far, this support has not been forthcoming.

I want to talk a little bit about the technology. I'm conscious that I have 10 minutes left, and I still have lots that I want to say. Let me see if I'm going to jump over this or go directly to—no, I'm going to stick with technology.

Bill 101 is a good first step—nobody will deny this—when it comes to narcotics tracking. When this legislation passes, it will mean that the Ministry of Health can collect prescribing and dispensing data for every patient in Ontario when it comes to narcotics and other controlled substances. You have to realize that this is not a comprehensive drug-tracking system. It will not allow health professionals to access information in real time. Remember the example that my colleague gave you? She used 20 different prescribers and 20 different pharmacies. People in northern Ontario drool over those numbers, but I take it that in other areas of the province, it is feasible.

Those physicians who are confronted with that patient still won't have this information in real time. So you may be physician number 20. This patient might have been going to 19 other physicians before you, and you are number 20, but you won't know this. You don't know this now and you won't know this after the bill has come forward either. It's not going to be accessible in real time to people who prescribe. However, it is supposed to send out alerts to health providers if they are concerned with the prescribing or dispensing pattern for a patient.

Health providers all speak about the dire need to have a full system of drug information for Ontario that would allow physicians, nurses and dentists etc., as well as pharmacists, to make full, informed decisions. You can't help but think that if that \$1 billion had been spent at eHealth in a different way, we could be in a very different spot right now. We could have a functioning electronic health record that would have a drug management

system built in that would already be there for practitioners in Ontario and for patients to use. But we're not there and, sadly, we're nowhere near there. We will have this database that will collect specific information about specific controlled drugs for specific reasons, and that won't be available in real time. A step in the right direction, absolutely. Is it the tool that we really need to make informed decisions that lead to quality care? I'll leave it up to you, but my opinion is that we're still far away from this. With the system proposed in Bill 101, health providers will continue to have only a partial view of their patients. How can health professionals make well-informed decisions when they only have a small piece of the information that they need?

The government has been totally silent on the standard they will be using to measure the success of Bill 101. This is something, again, that we heard lots about. How do you know that this will be effective? How do you know that you will have an impact on society if you don't set out evaluation criteria? This is an important step. This is not party politics. When you put something out, when you set out to do something, you should also set out to do how you will measure success, so that you can show success, or if you don't, so that you can take remedies. We didn't see any of this in Bill 1001; although we asked that it be put in there, we were not successful.

There's also a significant concern that this will become a numbers game rather than ensuring excellent health care for all. I've talked about this a bit, where I say that if you have an addiction and all of a sudden you don't have access to it, you will continue to have an addiction. Whether you have an addiction to OxyContin or you have an addiction to another street drug, you still have an addiction, with all of the societal problems that come with this. I don't want this to be a numbers game. I want this to be something that will help the people of Ontario lead better lives. I want this to be something that will improve the quality of the care that is delivered to the people of Ontario, whether you have chronic pain or you're dealing with an addiction.

Let's measure what we do and make sure that we don't embark into a numbers game where, "Oh, the number of prescriptions of narcotics has decreased." That could sound good. I could see this on the headline, you know: "Narcotic Prescriptions Go Down 60%." That would make a good headline. But that means nothing if you don't look at, what does it mean on the ground? Does that just mean that people have gone to other drugs? People have gone to the black market? People are dealing with addiction at the LCBO? You have to measure it so that we don't play a numbers game on an issue that is as important as what we're trying to deal with with Bill 101.

We can all see how primary care providers and pharmacists will be reluctant to prescribe and dispense narcotics, and the effect that will have. We already know that many providers are already reluctant to provide access to these drugs, but we cannot forget how important good pain management and good medication management are. Bill 101 is a step forward, but it is only one step when many, many more are needed.

The government announced the narcotics strategy with five elements. But we only see the details of one of these elements in this bill. As I said, the CPSO report has 31 recommendations. Only one of them is dealt with in Bill 101. This is a small piece of the puzzle. What's next? How is the government planning to move forward with a seamless system that ensures high-quality health care for Ontarians and a real safety net and basket of treatment services for Ontarians facing addictions? I would say that the answer to this is obvious to me: Implement the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions report, and we would have this. We could move forward, safely knowing that people are being looked after and that things will improve.

Why did the government choose to ignore the voices of so many communities when they rejected the idea of the committee travelling? I have said to you that when I hear people talk about 20 providers and 20 pharmacists, this is kind of disrespectful to the people in the north, in rural areas and in First Nations. This bill is really set for—you have a prescriber, you have a pharmacy, and you have a database. Well, in parts of the province that I represent, we have prescribers that are also dispensers. How is this going to work for them? In parts of the province that I represent, we have primary care models that don't look anything like what you have here in downtown Toronto. This bill is not made for all of Ontario. It is made for the masses, and it will help people in large urban areas, without a doubt. But I would have liked it to be inclusive of everybody in Ontario. I would have liked it to be inclusive of the people I represent in rural northern Ontario, and it is not. But I guess it will help some.

We wanted to go to the north. I wanted people in the committee to listen in and hear about those models and also hear their ideas about how they can help. But they refused to travel. We did not go to the north, and nobody from the north was heard when we had the public consultations; not one voice from the north was ever heard on Bill 101, I guess, except mine. But there are a lot of people who have a lot more to say, people who have lived experience on the ground, who also have good ideas and strategies as to how we can help this problem, but they were never given an opportunity to be heard. We never did travel to the north, we didn't travel to First Nations, we did not travel to remote areas, and we didn't travel to rural Ontario.

I mentioned privacy issues. Are Ontarians satisfied with the complex privacy issues that have been brought forward? I know our commissioner still has questions. Will the regulatory college and health professionals be assured that this will be a seamless system that prioritizes excellence in patient care? How come we are at third reading and we still have so many large questions unanswered, like, shouldn't we have dealt with this during first, second, public and clause-by-clause? How come all of those questions are still there for us to grapple with at third reading where, frankly, the chances of changing anything become slimmer and slimmer all the time?

This bill was a huge opportunity to provide a definitive direction forward, yet there are far too many wasted opportunities and far too many questions and answers. What a shame.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The time has come to the point where we now need to adjourn until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1014 to 1030.

NOTICE OF REASONED AMENDMENT

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 71(c), the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has filed notice of a reasoned amendment to the motion for second reading of Bill 135, An Act respecting financial and Budget measures and other matters. The order for second reading of Bill 135 may therefore not be called today.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Frank Klees: I would like to ask all members to join me in welcoming to the House today Jean-Luc Pullano and his fellow students at Holy Spirit Catholic school in Aurora and their teacher, Ms. Margaret Prince.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's my pleasure to welcome to the Legislature today Wayne Hanley, the national president of the UFCW, as well as Bob Linton of UFCW National.

Hon. Margaret R. Best: It's my pleasure to rise today to welcome to the Ontario Legislature the parents of our page captain, Mr. Connor Wood. I'm very pleased about this because he's from my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood. His parents, Susan and Dave Wood, are here today, and I would like to welcome them to the Legislature.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I'd like to introduce to Queen's Park today one of my employees, Alexandra Ainley from my Alliston constituency office.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I'd like to introduce an organization from my riding with students from all over the world, the Parkdale Intercultural Association, to the House this morning.

Hon. John Milloy: I know all members of the Legislature would like to introduce all the representatives from Ontario's college system who are visiting Queen's Park today—and a reminder of the College Ontario reception in rooms 228 and 230 today from 5 to 7. We welcome all those representatives here.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I'd like to introduce to the House my friend Louise Edmonds from Pembroke, Ontario. She's a lecturer at Algonquin College and the University of Ottawa. She did a lot of work with us on our long-term-care strategy and plan, and I'm delighted that she's here today.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity on behalf of the member from Oshawa and

page Kyle Fitzgerald to welcome his mother, Roxanne Fitzgerald, to the members' gallery today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

We have with us today in the members' gallery Mr. Brian Charlton, who represented Hamilton Mountain in the 31st to the 35th Parliaments. Welcome back to Queen's Park.

As well, we'd like to welcome Bob Frankford, who represented Scarborough East in the 35th Parliament. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Premier. The Premier's wage restraint plan has gone badly off the rails, and they seem to have no plan to get it back on track. Premier, you said that this was key to finally achieving a balanced budget, that you would lead by example. So let's test this out: Premier, how many deputy ministers, assistant deputy ministers and directors in the Ontario public service are paid more than the maximum that your government set for their positions?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm always prepared to engage my honourable colleague in a discussion about the importance of respecting taxpayer dollars. I know that he's going to want to do that in a way that demonstrates respect as well for all of our partners who work with us as we deliver public services that are so important to Ontario families.

I'll remind my honourable colleague as well that we have the second-lowest per capita spending in Canada as a province, which I think speaks to our commitment to fiscal responsibility.

I'll remind my honourable colleague as well that in comparison to the previous government, the use of consultants is down dramatically, travel expenses are down 23% and government advertising spending is down 20%. That's, again, in comparison to 2003. I think that's significant and it speaks to our continuing commitment to fiscal responsibility.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, the problem with your leadership, frankly, is that you set rules, you ignore the rules and then there are absolutely no consequences. You, yourself, have set caps for deputy ministers at \$220,000 a year, ADMs at \$168,000 a year and directors at \$131,000 a year. According to salary information obtained by the PC caucus, Premier, 367 senior bureaucrats in the OPS are paid more than the maximum cap that you yourself set. You even have one ministry, the Ministry of Government Services under Minister Takhar, that for some reason has three deputy ministers.

Premier, how can you ask Ontario families to pay more and live with less when you have blown past your own salary caps on 367 different occasions?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We are pleased to release to the public all that information, and the member opposite has done that.

We have some 67,000 people employed in the Ontario public service, which is about the level it was at in 2003 when we took office. We have, as the Premier pointed out, reduced the level of consultants year in and year out. Interestingly, though, when the Leader of the Opposition was in government, what they did was they fired civil servants, then hired them back as consultants and paid them more money. I remember that very clearly.

Then they hid Hydro One and OPG from public scrutiny. When we opened it up to public scrutiny, we saw a long list of Conservative operatives who worked for the Premier, who did all kinds of things, being paid excessive—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Final supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: It's unfortunate that the Premier did not respond to my question, because, Premier, leadership starts at the top.

Premier, these are the caps that you yourself set for senior bureaucrats and you've blown by them on 367 occasions. Let me give you one example: You have one assistant deputy minister, Ken Deane, who is paid almost half a million dollars per year; almost three times the cap for his position. Ironically, Mr. Deane is the ADM for health system accountability and performance. This means that Mr. Deane oversees eHealth Ontario, and he himself is a former board member at eHealth Ontario. eHealth, Premier, was not exactly a shining light in your administration, to say the least. Meanwhile, Ontario families who are playing by the rules and paying the bills wait up to 21 hours in emergency rooms in our province.

Premier, how can you explain this kind of bloat?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Of the roughly 67,000 employees of the Ontario public service—and let me, by the way, speak about the quality of our public service and the integrity of the people in the public service, those people who make their living delivering the best services we can ask for. By the way, the case he cited was less than they paid Paul Rhodes when he was a hidden consultant for Hydro One. It's less than they paid Gord Haugh when he worked for the Minister of Health at the time as a short-term consultant.

That member and his party want to disparage the very people who work hard on behalf of us. We won't engage in that game. We will continue to implement thoughtful policies that respect the taxpayer, unlike that member and his party, who abused the public purse, hid it from the public and then tried to advertise that they weren't doing it.

ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr. Tim Hudak: Let me try the Premier again, because leadership should start at the top. Premier, the problem is that your answer to your spending restraint

problem—when you're trying to dig us out of holes you've already dug us into, your problem is you keep digging it deeper and deeper. How can anyone take you seriously in public sector collective agreements when you've blown past your own maximum caps on 367 different occasions? How can anyone take you seriously when one of your ministers, Minister Takhar, has three deputy ministers of his own? Premier, you simply cannot achieve the wage freeze you promised because you lack absolutely any credibility on keeping spending in line or keeping your promises.

Premier, isn't your problem in your collective bargaining negotiations that, quite frankly, nobody takes you seriously?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Finance.
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Hon. Dwight Duncan: When we set about to restrain wages in the public and broader public sectors, we rejected the approach of a social contract. We rejected the approach of the previous government, which was to demonize public servants, to misstate facts about the important work that they do for us.

We have engaged in a process that is reported out in the fall statement. I'll remind the member opposite of this: There have been some 40 public sector agreements reached since the budget. Four of them were arbitrated above the requests that we had—I felt those decisions and the language around them were not appropriate. But what the member forgot to tell people was that half of those agreements have achieved zero and zero. The average rate of settlement in Ontario is now below that of Canada, below that of our municipalities and below the public sector. We will continue to work with—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: You know, I've asked the Premier now four questions on a very serious topic, about how he has allowed, on 367 different occasions, to blow by the maximum caps he'd set on senior civil servants. Premier, this also undermines your credibility, quite frankly, when it comes to achieving collective bargaining agreements that you promised would be zero and zero. Your finance minister is now boasting that half the settlements since the budget were tabled at zero and zero—which means half have not.

Your plan has gone completely off the rails. May I ask you at least this today, Premier? Will you table the collective agreement results to date to back up your finance minister's claim—because we are not sure it's in keeping with the facts—and then will you tell us how you'll find the savings for those who have not agreed to zero and zero?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We reject the tactic of that leader and his party. We're not going to call nurses hula hoop workers. We are not going to fire meat inspectors. We are not going to fire water inspectors. The member opposite would have the people believe that there are easy, quick fixes to these challenges. We have chosen a thoughtful approach that is bearing results. These are

always difficult issues, particularly when dealing with the broader public sector. We will continue to work both with management and unions in the broader public sector in an appropriate fashion, with respect for everyone involved.

I'm proud of the fact that our average rate of settlement is now well below that of the federal government, who simply gave up on anything. We'll continue to work with them. I have confidence in our partners in the broader public sector.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Maybe I'll try my luck one last time. To the Premier, to whom I've addressed these questions—because, Premier, I'd expect that you would give direction as leader of the government and Premier of the province on very serious issues.

Media reported that six public sector unions have ignored your hopeful rhetoric to cross your fingers, hope to achieve wage freezes at zero and zero and then spare Ontario families more McGuinty cuts to health care or education. Media reports go on to show that arbitrators continue to thumb their noses at your government because they don't take you seriously. Your wage freeze plan has gone badly off the rails and the only savings you seem to achieve are on the backs of non-unionized public sector workers, setting up an unlevel playing field.

Premier, in how many unreported collective bargaining agreements have arbitrators awarded wage increases? What is the total cost of your fiscal plan? When will you get your plan back—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: This government is looking for fairness for taxpayers while that member and his party are looking for a fight. We don't want to go back to the days of 26 million student days lost as a result of strikes.

Interjections.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I wish they would have brought the same degree of passion to Hydro One and OPG in their years of administration. I just want to remind the people of Ontario that Mike Harris, the former Tory Premier, received \$20,000 in consulting fees from Hydro One, unreported and hidden from the public. Paul Rhodes collected \$1,074,000 during PC rule through unpublished contracts with Ontario Hydro, published with environment—that was on the Walkerton case, I might add—published with the Ministry of Health and LCBO—untendered contracts. Tom Long's firm collected \$3.1 million in unpublished contracts and hidden—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

ENERGY POLICIES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. Later today, the McGuinty government will unveil a new

energy plan. Can the Premier tell us what happened to the last energy plan that his government produced?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I appreciate the attempted levity, but I think my honourable colleague understands that a few years back, we passed a law that requires that we have in place a long-term energy plan. There was no such law that existed before. We think that was an important step forward. We further required that that same plan be updated every three years as new technologies evolve and as we gain a better understanding of the future and the need for supply and those kinds of things.

I know that my honourable colleague, in fact, does understand that what we're doing is updating a plan. It's a long-term plan. It will speak to our continuing commitment as a government, on behalf of the people of Ontario, to ensure that there is a reliable supply of clean electricity. More than just that, it will at the same time lay the foundation for a new clean energy industry with new clean energy jobs right here in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Ontario families want affordable, reliable, clean electricity, and for seven long years, they've suffered as this government has lurched from plan to plan.

They promised to freeze rates and then let them climb by 75%. They promised to make conservation easier, and then they slapped a new sales tax on energy-efficient appliances. We're now approaching the eighth anniversary of a solemn promise to close coal plants within four years.

After seven long years of government bungling, why should people take today's energy plan seriously?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: One of the things that Ontarians will be entitled to ask—particularly after the Minister of Energy puts out the latest revision, the third three-year revision to our long-term energy plan—will be, where are the plans from the opposition parties?

We're going to make it perfectly clear as to where we stand. We stand, in particular, for clean energy. We're shutting down our coal-fired generation—not as quickly as anybody would like, but we're moving as quickly as we can responsibly do so.

We're investing in a new industry. We're creating thousands of new jobs. More than just ensuring that we're providing Ontarians with clean, renewable energy, we're also laying a foundation for a manufacturing centre to meet North American needs. We're number one in North America in the auto sector. We want to be a North American leader as well when it comes to the manufacture and sale of new renewable technologies. That's all part and parcel of a smart, responsible plan. Again, I ask, on behalf of Ontarians, because they'd like to compare, where's their plan, and where's their plan?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This government's energy policy is written on an Etch A Sketch: You never know when they're going to shake it and start all over again.

Last month, the unfair sales tax on hydro bills was absolutely necessary. This month, it needs to be rebated back. Last week, the government had time-of-use billing just right; it was perfect. This week, it's changing again. When will the government be shaking the Etch A Sketch on today's plan?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I know that the leader of the NDP is eagerly putting together her long-term energy plan. We will have ours out, again, this afternoon. We speak to our commitment to ensure that we have in place a clean, reliable, modern electricity system.

We talked about some of the specific supports that we're putting in place for families, whether it's our energy and property tax credit or whether it's taking 10% off their monthly electricity bill for the coming five years. There will be more assistance included in this afternoon's announcement.

We've got all of our plan out there in terms of costs, priorities, commitments and a vision. Again, at some point in time, it seems to me it becomes incumbent upon the opposition parties to put forward their alternative. Talk is cheap; investing in electricity over the long term is not. So, on behalf of Ontarians, I would ask the opposition parties to put out their plans so we can all take a look at them.

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. From more than a billion dollars on not-so-smart meters to sweetheart private power deals, this government has bungled the energy file.

Families are now wondering what's in store for them today. Published reports indicate it's a nuclear-filled future, this despite study after study showing Ontario doesn't need to have half of its power generated by nuclear energy. There are far less expensive options available. When will this government finally realize that nuclear energy is nothing more than a giant financial sinkhole?

1050

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I've come to understand what it is that the leader of the NDP doesn't want. She doesn't want us to invest in renewable electricity because that's too expensive—but the fact that they were, and apparently remain, committed to shutting down coal is of no relevance in that particular matter. She also tells us that she doesn't like emissions-free nuclear generation in the province of Ontario, which at present generates 50% of all of our electricity.

So she doesn't like nuclear; she doesn't like renewables. I assume she doesn't like gas. She doesn't want us to open up any new hydroelectric capacity in northern Ontario because that might cause some damage to the environment.

We've got our plan out, and we've got our costs out. We've been very clear; we're upfront. So, again, I ask on behalf of the people of Ontario: Where do they stand, where is their plan, and what are their costs going to be?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. Members will please come to order.

Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This government likes to talk about a commitment to clean, affordable power, but they're about to dump tens of billions more dollars into expensive nuclear power, while making very, very little effort at all on conservation measures in this province. Will we see a plan to help families who want to make responsible energy choices and cut their bills, or will they just be asked to pay more and more for new nuclear power?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: My honourable colleague says that she's in favour of more jobs for Ontario families. Does she really understand how many jobs are tied up in the nuclear sector in the province of Ontario? I think there are at least 25,000 jobs. Those are good, high-paying, clean-technology jobs.

The fact of the matter is, at some point in time, the opposition party is going to have to come clean. They're going to have to tell the people of Ontario what they're going to do about a very important matter of public policy. What are they going to do to ensure that we keep the lights on? That's not just an important matter for us in our homes; it's important to our schools, it's important to our hospitals, and it's important to our businesses. It's the very foundation of our wealth creation in the province of Ontario.

We have put forward a very specific, responsible, solid plan. We've been very upfront with the details—the costs, where we're going, why we're doing it—and we're committed to it.

What I'm saying now on behalf of the people of Ontario is, it's time for them to come out of their shells. It's time for them to tell us what exactly they are going to do to ensure that we have a clean, modern, reliable—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: People want to make responsible energy choices, but at every turn, those choices get more and more expensive. They were told the smart meters would help them save money and electricity; instead, they raised prices and didn't reduce consumption. They were encouraged to invest in energy-efficient appliances, but this summer the government slammed an unfair sales tax on them. When will this government start helping people save money and energy instead of making it harder to do both?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I think it's important to be clear to people who work in manufacturing, and in particular, in the nuclear industry, exactly where the NDP stand on what they say will be their views on the energy plan that will come out. We want to know.

We know full well that there are 70,000 jobs in the nuclear industry. The lion's share of those are in the

province of Ontario. Those are jobs from coast to coast to coast that rely on governments of Ontario providing 50% of the base.

I ask the NDP, where do they think the power is going to come from to fire up our industry, knowing full well that Ontario has the greatest cluster of industry in the country? We want to know what you're going to tell those manufacturers, if you wouldn't move forward with refurbishment of Darlington, if you wouldn't move forward with new builds in nuclear. We want to know where the NDP stands on good-paying jobs that would support a nuclear cluster that is the best cluster in North America. Where—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Premier. Premier McGuinty is out of touch with Ontario families who cannot afford his expensive energy experiments. While former minister George Smitherman said that Ontario families would pay only 1% per year for his Green Energy Act projects, the Premier's own numbers show they will pay 56% more for sweetheart deals he is making with foreign multinationals. Take, for example, his sweetheart deal with IKEA: IKEA will receive almost \$700,000 a year for power that retails for \$115,000 on the retail market.

Why can't the Premier understand that Ontario families who struggle with their hydro bills cannot afford to pay six to seven times more for his sweetheart energy deals?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I appreciate the question. One of the things that the latest revision of our long-term energy plan will demonstrate this afternoon is that there's a limit in terms of how far we envision going with respect to the makeup of renewable energy inside the entire complement, which I think is the responsible thing to do.

But this is really important, and I think this is the crux of it. We're committed to shutting down coal in Ontario; they're not. We're committed to clean air; they're not. We're committed to reducing deaths, illnesses, hospitalizations and respiratory ailments; they're not. That's a fundamental difference. There, Ontarians can be very clear in terms of the contrast. We're shutting down coal; they want to keep burning coal. I think Ontarians are going to want to keep that in mind.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Premier McGuinty's massive sweetheart subsidies to a foreign multinational have spawned more sweetheart deals with more foreign companies. IKEA says that it will produce enough power to light 100 homes. Under the feed-in tariff rates that you set, IKEA will receive over 71 cents for each kilowatt hour it produces. That works out to almost \$6,800 a year for each of those 100 homes—well over the \$1,500 average for families in the GTA. What makes you think

that Ontario families can afford to pay \$5,000 more per year for power—\$5,000 more than it costs?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: That's an interesting fantasy, but I think facts are always more important.

It's interesting that there's a theme that the official opposition continues to weave more broadly through its policies. They're against all things foreign. They never reference Samsung unless they talk about it being a foreign company. They're not comfortable with the notion of foreign students studying in the province of Ontario. I don't know why they're afraid of the rest of the world, but we're not. We're open to the rest of the world. We're open to new investment in our province. We're open to new students coming here. We're open to new ideas. We're open to new wealth creation.

Let them be afraid of the world. Let them sink into the past. We're for moving ahead. We're open to a new Ontario. We're optimistic. We're eager to embrace the world. We're going to build a stronger province.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Members will please come to order.

New question.

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Mr. Peter Tabuns: For the Premier: The Pembina Institute says that replacing the Pickering B nuclear plant at the end of its life with renewable energy would cost up to 48% less than replacing it with a new nuclear reactor at Darlington. Investing in energy efficiency, cogeneration and even hydro imports from Quebec can meet Ontario's electricity needs for less than the cost of rebuilding the Darlington nuclear plant.

Ontarians are already struggling to pay rising hydro bills. Why won't the government invest in lower-cost alternatives to new nuclear power?

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Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, here we are. This is the NDP, and at some point you no longer enjoy the luxury of offering criticism from the comfort, security and convenience of the sidelines. At some point in time, you've got to get into the game and you've got to declare yourself as to what are you in favour of.

I just want to revisit it. They're against nuclear even though that generates 50% of all of our electricity today. They're against clean energy because they say it's too expensive. That implicitly means that they're against shutting down coal, which means they're in favour of keeping coal open, which means they're in favour of more smog days, they're in favour of deaths and illnesses that are connected with the burning of coal in the province of Ontario. That's what they're in favour of.

If they've got something different, if they've got a different plan, then let's hear it. Let's put it on the table. We put ours on the table, our costs on the table, our specifics on the table. Let's—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Hamilton East.

Supplementary.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Ontarians want clean energy and they want affordable energy. Nuclear power is neither clean nor affordable. The cost of building nuclear reactors is doubling while renewable energy costs are projected to fall. Why is the government locking Ontario into decades of new nuclear cost overruns without publicly exploring cleaner and more cost-effective alternatives?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: There is no more aggressive jurisdiction in all of North America when it comes to building renewable energy than right here in Ontario. Every day they stand up and they say they don't like it; they say it's too expensive. We have at least 40 different energy conservation programs in place right now that we continue to fund. Now they're telling us that in addition to not liking renewables because they're too expensive—even though that means we can shut down our coal plants, even though that means we have cleaner air and fewer smog days, even though it means we're creating a new industry with new jobs—they don't like nuclear.

They can't have it all ways. There is no magic when it comes to putting in place a clean, modern, reliable electricity system. It's hard work. You've got to make decisions. You've got to act responsibly. That's what we continue to do, and we'll keep doing that every single day on behalf of Ontario families.

AIR QUALITY

Mr. Charles Sousa: My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Constituents in the great riding of Mississauga South want to help protect the air we breathe. They know they can do their part by taking transit, carpooling, biking or walking instead of driving.

As you know, Minister, the Southwest Greater Toronto Area Air Quality Task Force, chaired by Dr. Balsillie, completed their report over the summer. We're fortunate that so many in the community were engaged throughout this process and continue to work to reduce our local emissions. But they also want to see our government continue its leadership in developing policies that conserve energy and reduce emissions. They want action to make sure their children have cleaner air. Minister, my constituents want to know, with much of the energy discussion focused on costs, is conservation still a government priority to protect the air we breathe?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I say to my friend, absolutely. The simplest thing that we can do and the least expensive thing that we can do is to conserve electricity. If we don't need it in the first place, it saves consumers money and it saves us money. That's why over the last few years we've had conservation measures that have resulted in some 1,700 megawatts of electricity being conserved.

That's the equivalent of taking some 500,000 homes off the grid. That's all very good.

But on this side of the House, we are not going back to dirty coal. On this side of the House, we're shutting down dirty coal. I know the members opposite have a love affair with dirty coal. They want to see those days come back when the amount of coal that we used rose by 127%. Under our government, that is going down because the price of clean air is priceless. We are going to have the cleanest sources of electricity in North America. We'll continue to lead. It's what our—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary.

Mr. Charles Sousa: My community recognizes that the government's commitment to conservation and renewables like wind, solar, nuclear and hydroelectric will make sure we have clean air to breathe and jobs for our children. We also know that investing in renewables and conservation is what allows us to shut down polluting coal plants like Lakeview and others.

It would not be fair to the next generation to go back to the failed energy policies of the previous government. These policies would see coal emissions increase, Ontario become a net importer of energy or diesel generators in downtown Toronto as part of their long-term energy plan. While it is clear that wind and solar are the better alternatives, I think you can agree that actions speak louder than words.

Minister, my question is simple: With the member for Sarnia-Lambton recently reaffirming the PCs' commitment to coal, is the government still committed to eliminating dirty coal from our energy mix?

Hon. John Wilkinson: Absolutely. We are eliminating coal, and we've taken action. We're already ahead of schedule. This year alone, we've shut down another four units.

I know it was a happy day in Mississauga South and for all the people in the southwest GTA when the Lakeview generating station was closed. That is the beginning of closing all of our coal-fired generation, because the days of burning dirty coal are coming to an end. Though there are people on the other side who have a love affair with dirty coal, we do not, because people deserve clean air, and clean air costs us a lot less money because we have universal health care.

At the Ministry of the Environment, we agree with the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, with Environmental Defence and with the Canadian Lung Association that the right thing to do, the smart thing to do and the best thing that we can do for our children is to say no to dirty coal. That's why we're committed to do that.

I want to thank the member for his leadership in letting people know that there is a brighter, cleaner future for Ontario—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Steve Clark: My question is for the Minister of Health. On November 4, the Ontario PC caucus gave the Acting Premier and media photographs of leaves strewn across the floor of the emergency garage at Credit Valley Hospital in Mississauga. Earlier that same week, the CEO of the Champlain LHIN spoke about dealing with McGuinty Liberal health care cuts that are affecting emergency rooms in Ottawa. He said, “We need to beg, borrow, or steal any good ideas.” Minister, will he beg, borrow or steal Credit Valley Hospital’s blueprints for converting a garage into the McGuinty wing?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: This is an issue that has come up in this House before, and I am astonished that the member opposite would raise this issue again.

I have a question: Have you or has anyone in your caucus visited the emergency department at Credit Valley Hospital? Have you or anyone in your caucus actually spoken to anyone in the emergency department at Credit Valley Hospital—the doctors, the nurses? Are you more interested in your politically motivated drive-by smear campaign than you are in health care for the people of this province?

It is completely unacceptable for a party that pretends to care about health care in this province to make attacks on the professionalism of front-line health care workers in this province. It is completely irresponsible—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister, you just answered the question. I need you to listen to the supplementary, please.

Supplementary.

Mr. Steve Clark: As the minister knows, I’ve sent both her and the member from Mississauga–Streetsville the photographs. As well, I shared an email from the chief communications officer of Credit Valley confirming the hospital renovated its garage “to include heating and other necessary utilities for patient care.” Just days before that email, the CEO of the Champlain LHIN said he was looking at Mississauga hospitals in particular for “best practices” for improving emergency rooms. He said, “There’s stuff that they’ve done that we need to import here.”

Mechanics will tell you that they have electronic records that do a better job of telling the oil change history of your car than eHealth records do for patient history. Which garage did you refer the CEO of the Champlain LHIN to for best practices?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The party opposite is demonstrating their complete inability to understand health care in this province. They are not competent to criticize health care.

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I ask you again: Have you, has any one from your caucus or has even any member of your staff actually

visited the hospital to find out what was happening there? I have enormous respect for the health care professionals at Credit Valley Hospital, and I think you would too if you took the time to talk to them. You owe an apology to every single person who works at Credit Valley Hospital. You owe an apology to every single person who works in health care across this province. You owe an apology to the people of Mississauga.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Members will please come to order.

Order. Minister of Finance, member from Durham, member from Simcoe–Grey, Minister of Consumer Services, Minister of Economic Development, member from Cambridge.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): It’s interesting, honourable members, and the pages have noted this: It seems like, day after day, it’s the same members that I need to call to order. There are so many of you in this House who do not have to be called, and I really don’t want to get into the position of having to name members for interjections. Interjections can be healthy—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): But it’s also healthy for members to listen when the Speaker is speaking, too, member from Simcoe North and the member from Cambridge as well. I think that’s three times I’ve mentioned his name.

New question.

CELLPHONES

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Promotion de la santé.

Dr. Devra Davis is a world-renowned Nobel Prize winner, award-winning scientist and author, and expert on health risks of cellphone radiation. She’s in Ontario today. I had the opportunity to speak with Dr. Davis about cellphone risk. She is impressive.

Recently, the minister rejected outright my private member’s bill that would force cellphone manufacturers to move health warnings already in the small print in their manual to a sticker attached to the phone, saying that cellphones are not safe. The minister says that they’re safe.

Dr. Davis invited the minister to discuss science around cellphone safety, but the minister ignored the invitation. Why is the minister refusing to look at the ever-growing body of scientific evidence linking cellphone use to health risk?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: It’s a pleasure for me to rise in the Legislature to answer this question and address this issue. I want to, again, refer this member to the chief medical officer of health, our expert, who says, “I want to assure Ontarians that there is no established causal link between the use of wireless communication systems, including cellphones and adverse effects on human health.”

Our government takes the health and well-being of Ontarians very seriously. I also want to say that the medical experts at Health Canada say, "There is at present no scientific basis for the premise of health risk from radiofrequency electromagnetic energy at levels below the limits within [their] safety code."

I, again, refer—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: The body of scientific evidence is forever growing. Toronto Public Health and the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion—an agency of this minister—have both issued health warnings. Maine, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Portland—and the list goes on—are all taking action. But the Ontario Minister of Health Promotion says that she knows better.

Today, Cancer Care Ontario is requesting an extra \$800 million for the ever-increasing number of Ontarians developing cancer, and the minister refuses to take proactive steps to decrease the risk of cancer.

Why is the minister ignoring Dr. Davis, her own agency, the precautionary principle, and leading scientists and not taking measures that do not cost a cent to the government and are essential for reducing cancer risks, especially to our children?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: Again, I would like to say to the member opposite that this government takes the health of Ontarians seriously, particularly the health of Ontario's children.

I want to take this opportunity to say in this Legislature that parents have a hand to play in how much time their children are spending on cellphones.

I go again to the chief medical officer of health. I want to quote from a letter that was written to the member for Nickel Belt: "I would like to reassure you and the parents who have contacted you that the use of wireless communication systems does not pose a public health risk."

I would again refer you to the Health Canada standards, which are responsible for setting the standards relating to cellphone use. The standards, according to our chief medical officer of health, are consistent with other jurisdictions—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

SERVICES FOR ABUSED MEN

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: My question is for the Attorney General. There is a clear and recognized need for male victim and counselling services in our communities. Men who have suffered abuse deserve support and hope as they courageously address difficult and trying issues.

In my riding of Ottawa Centre, a non-profit men's counselling agency called the Men's Project is doing excellent work to assist male survivors of sexual abuse. I have been privileged to work closely with the organization, and I commend them for the support and healing programs they provide, programs that specifically address and support the unique needs of male survivors.

It is not only the individual who must overcome the trauma of sexual abuse, but whole communities and families that are affected as well. How is the government responding to those survivors, families and communities who are calling out for counselling and support services to assist male victims of sexual abuse?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: The member makes a very important point, because there hasn't been, across this province, a coordinated, comprehensive approach to the needs of male survivors of sexual abuse. There never has been.

We want to thank projects like the Men's Project for the excellent work that they've been doing. The ministry has been supporting that project.

But they have made the point—so many have made the point, so many who have not had access to counselling services: We need a comprehensive, province-wide approach, and that's why we announced in the summer that we're going to move ahead with a comprehensive, province-wide approach to make sure that male survivors and their families get access to the very important counselling and healing support services that they need, so that they can address the issues of the past and build a stronger future.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: My community will be pleased to know that our government is committed to ensuring that Ontarians, both male and female, can live in a safe and secure environment in their homes and communities.

Sexual violence of any kind, on any person, is unacceptable in our society. We know it is devastating, and it's something that will often need tremendous courage and support to overcome.

I'm glad to hear that our government is implementing plans to comprehensively address the very real concerns of male survivors, who, sadly, have been underserved or unacknowledged in the past.

In meeting with the people in my riding who are themselves survivors of abuse, they tell me that it is important for them to be consulted in relation to the delivery of services under this plan. Can the Attorney General tell us how he intends to consult with survivors and support services in this province so that we can ensure that victims can have faith that they will receive the critical services they need to recover?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I thank the member for the question identifying a very important issue. We want to make sure that the service that is developed is as strong as it can be and meets the needs, as disparate as they might be, across the province.

A lot of work and consultation and receipt of recommendations occurred over the course of the inquiry, and a lot of input from groups like the Men's Project and the other services that have been offering assistance. But in spite of our wish to proceed as quickly as possible to build something that has not existed, we've taken advice and we're taking some extra time to make sure that we can hear voices that have not yet been heard, receive advice from people who are concerned that hasn't yet

been received, so that when we implement this service, it is as strong as it can be and meets the needs of male survivors, wherever they happen to be in the province of Ontario.

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ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mr. Ted Arnott: My question is again to the Minister of Health. Yesterday, in response to our questions concerning Lucas Macieszka, who is suffering from a rare blood disorder known as PNH, the minister implied that the efficacy of the drug Soliris has not yet been established. However, following question period, the minister said that hospitals can allow this drug to be prescribed if they have room in their global budgets. In fact, the North Bay hospital has done just that. We also now know that last night a two-week treatment of Soliris was prescribed for Lucas, now that he has been admitted to the Victoria hospital in London.

Why is the minister allowing random factors like geography and hospital budgets to determine whether someone gains access to this life-saving drug?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Yesterday, we spoke about the Committee to Evaluate Drugs and the fact that it is no longer politicians who decide what drugs are covered under the Ontario drug benefit plan and what drugs are not. We have an arm's-length expert group that reviews all of the evidence and makes the very difficult decisions about what drugs ought to be covered and what drugs are not covered.

The Committee to Evaluate Drugs has looked at Soliris on two different occasions. They have determined that it is not appropriate to fund that drug for all patients with PNH but that there might be a small subset of patients for whom the drug is effective. So the Committee to Evaluate Drugs deals with drugs outside of hospitals; hospitals make their own decisions about drugs within.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: We don't have a lot of time to sit here and discuss and study this issue. This is a life-saving treatment for an individual, and there are seven other people in the province of Ontario who are deteriorating daily.

Soliris has been prescribed in 25 countries, including the United States, Japan and the European Union. Why are you continuing to deny access to life-saving treatment to all Ontarians who need it?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: This is, of course, a very, very troubling situation, and members from all parties have approached our government on this.

As I say, politicians do not make decisions about what drugs are covered, nor should they. What politicians should do, and what politicians have a responsibility to do, is ensure that there is a significant amount of money in our drug budget.

We have made significant reforms in our drug system—reforms that were opposed by the party opposite—that expanded the number of drugs that we can cover in

the formulary and that expanded the number of people we can cover with drugs.

These are difficult decisions. We do have experts who review the case. I cannot speak to the specifics of any particular case. What I can say is that we have taken action to expand the number of drugs that we can cover and the people who are covered.

AGRICULTURAL LABOUR POLICY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. Last week, the International Labour Organization ruled that this government's refusal to recognize the collective bargaining rights of agricultural workers is a clear violation of international conventions. Why is the McGuinty government so hell-bent on denying basic human rights to the people who grow our food and help feed our families?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Peter Fonseca: We do understand that the ILO has made some recommendations regarding collective bargaining within the agricultural sector. We are looking at and reviewing the report that has been put forward by the ILO.

The member, I know, is fully aware that the Supreme Court of Canada is looking at an appeal of this case. It has been before them since December 17, 2009, and it has reserved its decision. As this case concerning collective bargaining in the agricultural sector is before the courts, it would be inappropriate, as the member knows full well, for me to comment otherwise.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: UFCW Canada has been advocating for the labour rights of agricultural workers for more than 15 years. In fact, as I introduced him earlier, UFCW Canada national president Wayne Hanley is here with us this morning.

The government of Alberta and the one here in Ontario are the only governments in this country that continue to refuse and to deny agricultural workers these rights. When is this government going to finally do the right thing and do something positive? When are they going to finally stop violating international standards and commit to working with UFCW Canada to ensure the human rights of these workers?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: Again, as this case is before the courts, it would be inappropriate for me to comment. I do welcome the UFCW, Wayne Hanley and Bob Linton, who are here with us today.

We've made great strides when it comes to the agricultural sector. It should be noted that it is our government that extended the Occupational Health and Safety Act to this sector in 2006. It should be noted that we've trained over 100 inspectors on agriculture safety specific to farms. That's under our government. Again, in June 2008, we started proactively inspecting farms. This is all under our government. We will continue to ensure that workers, in agriculture or in any other sector, are kept safe.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: My question is to the Minister of Labour. Minister, accidents involving conveyers can result in significant injury, or even loss of life. A couple of weeks ago, you visited the Weetabix manufacturing facility in my riding to announce that the ministry will be undertaking heightened enforcement, specifically addressing conveyor guarding hazards. Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Can you please tell the House more about the upcoming Ministry of Labour conveyor guarding blitz?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I want to thank the member. I did have an opportunity to visit his beautiful riding and the many businesses that he has in his riding on November 1. We went to a business that actually has many conveyor belts working within that business, and that is part of our safety blitz right now, looking at conveyers.

We don't have a whole lot of injuries that happen with conveyers, but when they do happen, many times they are very serious injuries. That's why we're doing this through our Safe at Work Ontario strategy, which assists workers and employers in correcting any hazards that may exist within their workplace.

This is a proactive approach. It's good for everybody. Our government is committed to ensuring that all workers, when they go to work, can feel protected and come home safe and sound to their families.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Just for your information, Weetabix is a manufacturer of cereals. They use all Ontario grains and export their products all over the world.

Minister, you mentioned a couple of things in your visit that really hit home. Between 2005 and 2008, two workers died and 48 workers were seriously injured in conveyor accidents alone. I understand the total cost of these injuries was more than \$7.3 million.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Are there specific workplaces that are being targeted for this important blitz?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: We did have an opportunity to visit Weetabix. They make great products that they sell here, across Canada and internationally. Because they have many conveyers at that business, that's why we were there. Other businesses that are being targeted as well are those that have many conveyers in place. With this targeting, we're looking at where there have been complaints received by the ministry about a particular business with conveyers, as well as a history of non-compliance.

Keeping Ontario's workplaces safe is in everyone's best interests. Workplace hazards put employees at risk and affect the bottom line for employees. We all know that, and that's why our health and safety strategy, through Safe at Work Ontario, takes a very proactive approach to safety in this province. It's working, and we're getting positive results for employers, for workers and for the entire system.

AGENCY SPENDING

Mr. Ted Arnott: My question today is for the Minister of Tourism. After it came to light last week that a former Niagara Parks Commission executive got away with cheating Ontario families on expenses for roller-coaster rides, nightclub tabs, alcohol and lavish trips to London, Korea and Las Vegas, the Premier stated in his media availability, and I quote, "Some people have said it is not taxpayer dollars, so it is not important."

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The "some people" the Premier was referring to that day was, in fact, the Minister of Tourism's spokesperson, Mukunthan Paramalingham, who told media the previous day that public dollars were not being wasted by the former Niagara executive as the commission generates its own revenue.

Whose side does the minister take: the Premier's or his handpicked spokesperson's?

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you very much for the question. This matter was brought to my attention by the chair of the Niagara Parks Commission. As I mentioned, these expenses were incurred prior to the implementation of new expense rules.

From inception, the Niagara Parks Commission has been a completely self-funded agency, operating at no cost to the Ontario taxpayer. That said, these expenses are not appropriate and are not acceptable. I have asked the chair to look into the matter. Ms. Booker has key skills in governance, accounting and auditing. She has made significant changes to the long-standing corporate culture and practices at the commission. I am confident that the new chair will take all the necessary steps to ensure that the new expense rules are strictly adhered to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Ted Arnott: The Niagara Parks Commission expense scandal and this government's response to it shows that the McGuinty Liberals do not take accountability any more seriously since the expense scandals at the OLG and eHealth.

Mr. Paramalingham was speaking for the minister. The Premier has now been reduced to correcting the record for his ministers. No one—not the minister, nor the commission—was blowing the whistle on these expenses, which we were told went through two levels of audits.

If the McGuinty Liberals cannot learn their lesson and change after the billion-dollar eHealth boondoggle, why would Ontario families believe they can ever change now?

Hon. Michael Chan: I want to thank the honourable member for that question again.

Our new chair, Fay Booker, has key skills in corporate governance and auditing. The fact of the matter is, Ms. Booker is changing the long-standing corporate culture and practice of the Niagara Parks Commission. She is changing the way expenses are reviewed and approved for the chair and the board. She is restructuring the operations of the commission to ensure greater accountability

and transparency, and she's moving forward on the implementation of the governance review.

Let us be assured that these are only a few of the many changes that Ms. Booker is leading. As I said before, she is looking into the matter. I have full confidence that she will take necessary steps to ensure that the NPC becomes a more accountable and transparent operation.

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Minister of Labour. In Chatham, as you know, the unemployment rate sits at nearly 14%. Many young people who have been laid off good-paying industrial jobs have taken work in restaurant industries to try to make ends meet.

A woman named Helen from Chatham, who asked that her last name not be used because she's afraid, wrote to me. She knows many servers whose tips are being stolen by their bosses, even though they earn much less than minimum wage, but these workers can't afford to complain. If they do, they'll join the growing numbers of unemployed. There's nowhere else for them to go.

Why is this government still allowing restaurant owners in Chatham and elsewhere to steal their employees' tips?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: Any story we hear that affects the life of a hard-working Ontarian affects us all. That's why we've brought in further protections through our Employment Standards Act to protect our most vulnerable workers especially.

We understand the important hard work of those who are part of our hospitality sector, be it waiters or waitresses, hostesses, bartenders, chefs and others. They do some outstanding service for all of us because they represent us as our ambassadors.

Any worker who feels that they have been mistreated or that their rights have been violated, I encourage them to contact the Ministry of Labour so that our officers can look into an employment standards issue, or if it's a health and safety issue, that our inspectors can come in and investigate.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Michael Prue: When workers across this province ask the ministry to do something about the egregious actions of tip-outs, this minister and his ministry say that there's nothing they can do because they won't change the law.

This minister continues with his rhetoric but says nothing to address the growing unfair practice. Young, low-paid restaurant workers in Chatham and across Ontario are being ripped off for the tip money that they have earned. The minister knows it. When will this government do the right thing and make it against the law for owners to steal tips from their servers? Please, give us an answer on the topic.

Hon. Peter Fonseca: What I think all Ontarians and all business people understand—managers and owners—is that by treating employees fairly, with respect, with caring, with understanding and ensuring that all rules are

followed, that is the best way to conduct a business. To come here and to paint the brush across many businesses, many of them small businesses, here in Ontario I think is really unfair.

What we have to do is to continue to protect our most vulnerable workers. We do that at the Ministry of Labour by providing services in over 23 different languages, by working with worker advocacy groups and looking at our labour market to ensure that all workers are protected. That's what we will continue to do. It's our top priority.

I understand this is the member's private member's bill. He has presented a healthy debate, which I think is good—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. The time for question period has ended.

DEFERRED VOTES

WATER OPPORTUNITIES AND WATER CONSERVATION ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT DES TECHNOLOGIES DE L'EAU ET LA CONSERVATION DE L'EAU

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 72, An Act to enact the Water Opportunities Act, 2010 and to amend other Acts in respect of water conservation and other matters / Projet de loi 72, Loi édictant la Loi de 2010 sur le développement des technologies de l'eau et modifiant d'autres lois en ce qui concerne la conservation de l'eau et d'autres questions.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1137 to 1142.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Wilkinson has moved third reading of Bill 72. All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Duncan, Dwight	Murray, Glen R.
Albanese, Laura	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Naqvi, Yasir
Arthurs, Wayne	Fonseca, Peter	Pendergast, Leeanna
Balkissoon, Bas	Gerretsen, John	Phillips, Gerry
Bartolucci, Rick	Gélinas, France	Prue, Michael
Bentley, Christopher	Hoskins, Eric	Pupatello, Sandra
Best, Margaret	Jaczek, Helena	Qadri, Shafiq
Bradley, James J.	Jeffrey, Linda	Ramal, Khalil
Brotten, Laurel C.	Johnson, Rick	Ramsay, David
Brown, Michael A.	Kormos, Peter	Rinaldi, Lou
Brownell, Jim	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ruprecht, Tony
Cansfield, Donna H.	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Carroll, Aileen	Mangat, Amrit	Smith, Monique
Chan, Michael	Matthews, Deborah	Sousa, Charles
Colle, Mike	McGuinty, Dalton	Tabuns, Peter
Crozier, Bruce	McMeekin, Ted	Takhar, Harinder S.
Delaney, Bob	McNeely, Phil	Van Bommel, Maria
Dhillon, Vic	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wilkinson, John
Dickson, Joe	Milloy, John	Wynne, Kathleen O.
DiNovo, Cheri	Mitchell, Carol	

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those opposed?

Nays

Arnott, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Barrett, Toby
Chudleigh, Ted
Clark, Steve
Dunlop, Garfield
Elliott, Christine
Hardeman, Ernie
Hillier, Randy

Hudak, Tim
Jones, Sylvia
Klees, Frank
MacLeod, Lisa
Martiniuk, Gerry
Miller, Norm
Munro, Julia
Murdoch, Bill
O'Toole, John

Ouellette, Jerry J.
Savoline, Joyce
Shurman, Peter
Sterling, Norman W.
Wilson, Jim
Witmer, Elizabeth
Yakabuski, John

Brownell, Jim
Cansfield, Donna H.
Caplan, David
Carroll, Aileen
Chan, Michael
Chudleigh, Ted
Clark, Steve
Colle, Mike
Crozier, Bruce
Delaney, Bob
Dhillon, Vic
Dickson, Joe
DiNovo, Cheri
Duncan, Dwight
Dunlop, Garfield
Elliott, Christine

Kormos, Peter
Lalonde, Jean-Marc
Leal, Jeff
MacLeod, Lisa
Mangat, Amrit
Martiniuk, Gerry
Matthews, Deborah
McGuinty, Dalton
McMeekin, Ted
McNeely, Phil
Meilleur, Madeleine
Miller, Norm
Miller, Paul
Milloy, John
Mitchell, Carol
Munro, Julia

Ruprecht, Tony
Sandals, Liz
Savoline, Joyce
Shurman, Peter
Smith, Monique
Sousa, Charles
Sterling, Norman W.
Tabuns, Peter
Takhar, Harinder S.
Van Bommel, Maria
Wilkinson, John
Wilson, Jim
Witmer, Elizabeth
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Yakabuski, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 59; the nays are 25.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

ENHANCEMENT OF THE ONTARIO ENERGY AND PROPERTY TAX CREDIT FOR SENIORS AND ONTARIO FAMILIES ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION DU CRÉDIT D'IMPÔT DE L'ONTARIO POUR LES COÛTS D'ÉNERGIE ET LES IMPÔTS FONCIERS À L'INTENTION DES PERSONNES ÂGÉES ET DES FAMILLES DE L'ONTARIO

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 109, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to implement the Ontario energy and property tax credit and to make consequential amendments / Projet de loi 109, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts pour mettre en oeuvre le crédit d'impôt de l'Ontario pour les coûts d'énergie et les impôts fonciers et apporter des modifications corrélatives.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

Interjection: Same vote.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? No.

The division bells rang from 1146 to 1147.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia
Albanese, Laura
Arnott, Ted
Arthurs, Wayne
Bailey, Robert
Balkissoon, Bas
Barrett, Toby
Bartolucci, Rick
Bentley, Christopher
Best, Margaret
Bradley, James J.
Broten, Laurel C.
Brown, Michael A.

Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Fonseca, Peter
Gerretsen, John
Gélinas, France
Hardeman, Ernie
Hillier, Randy
Hoskins, Eric
Hudak, Tim
Jaczek, Helena
Jeffrey, Linda
Johnson, Rick
Jones, Sylvia
Klees, Frank

Murdoch, Bill
Murray, Glen R.
Naqvi, Yasir
O'Toole, John
Ouellette, Jerry J.
Pendergast, Leeanna
Phillips, Gerry
Prue, Michael
Pupatello, Sandra
Qaadri, Shafiq
Ramal, Khalil
Ramsay, David
Rinaldi, Lou

Mr. Paul Miller: Another half-assed bill.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Hamilton East will withdraw the comment that he just made.

Mr. Paul Miller: I withdraw that.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 86; the nays are 0.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Peter Kormos: I rise on a point of privilege, and I make this point of privilege jointly with my colleague the House leader for the official opposition, who will be speaking briefly to it as well.

On November 19, the government released a media advisory indicating that the Honourable Brad Duguid, Minister of Energy, would present Ontario's updated long-term energy plan to ensure a clean, modern and reliable energy future on Tuesday, November 23, 2010, in the Ontario North boardroom, Macdonald Block, 900 Bay Street, Toronto. Media registration opens at 12:30 p.m.; documents are available for review at 12:30 p.m.; technical briefing by ministry staff at 1:45 p.m. It's noted that the material in the technical briefing is embargoed. "Media are not permitted to leave the briefing room until the completion of the minister's press conference"—the minister's news conference is at 2:30 p.m.

I would ask the Speaker to note that the media advisory certainly does not invite members of the Legislative Assembly, least of all opposition members or their staff, and indeed, no invitation has been extended to date. In fact, we are advised—this media advisory came out on November 19—that as of this very moment, there is still no ministerial statement planned for this chamber and no invitation has been extended to opposition members or our staff for the purpose of the briefing.

Speaker, Speakers have risen in this chamber on far too many occasions to admonish the government of the day for making statements outside the chamber that ought to be made inside the chamber. This assembly happens to be sitting. This happens to be a significant policy

announcement. It's an announcement that is being kept secret until the moment of the announcement—of course, except for the inevitable leaks to the *Toronto Star*. But I'll ask you to note that in the *Star* article of this morning, the Spears-Ferguson article, it says, "Premier Dalton McGuinty was mum on further details about the" Liberals' "long-term energy plan Monday." So it's clear that the government had, in its agenda, the maintenance of some significant level of secrecy around this announcement, and that's fine: So be it.

We witnessed last week an economic statement done in this chamber as a ministerial statement, where it ought to have been done.

I submit to you, Speaker, that the government's failure to announce its policy to this assembly before making that announcement elsewhere is a breach of convention and a breach of the collective privilege of this Legislature and of its members.

I will not go further. I would, however, refer the Speaker—the Speaker is well aware of O'Brien and Bosc, page 145, where it's noted: "In the vast majority of cases, the chair decides that a prima facie case of privilege has not been made. In informing the House of such a decision, the chair customarily explains (often in some detail) the factors which resulted in this finding. However, in such cases, the chair will often acknowledge the existence of a genuine grievance and may recommend avenues of redress."

I submit to you, sir, that this is a breach of privilege, but in the event that you cannot find that it is a prima facie breach, I would ask you, sir, to acknowledge that it is a genuine grievance on the part of the opposition, and I would further ask you to recommend avenues of redress.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski: As my colleague the NDP House leader indicated, we are together in this point of privilege.

In addition to all of the points that the member has indicated with regards to the convention of matters being dealt with in this House or announced in this House prior to other locations—and we just had that last week, with the fall economic statement delivered by the Minister of Finance—there's a further concern with respect to even members of this House being given an opportunity to hear or be made aware of this statement later than the media themselves. I give evidence of that: The media will have this available for them for review at 12:30 pm. My staff was told this morning by the minister's office that we would not be welcome at that announcement. In fact, we would be—there was no room at the inn, as they say. There was only room for the media. We could not see the document until 2 p.m., at the technical briefing, and only the critic and one staff member could attend.

The actions of this government, as it comes under increasing pressure as a result of their failures to the people of Ontario, are becoming more and more questionable. I would like to just read you a ruling from Speaker Fraser's October 10, 1989, ruling that makes it clear that

contempt is not limited to direct words or action against the assembly. On page 4459 of Hansard, he states about contempt, "It does not have to actually obstruct or impede the House or a member, it merely has to have the tendency to produce such results. Matters ranging from minor breaches of decorum to grave attacks against the authority of Parliament may be considered as contempts."

When the government is blatantly telling us as members of this assembly, duly elected and within our responsibility as Her Majesty's loyal opposition, that we will be prevented from seeing this document at the same time that the media will see it, that constitutes a breach of privilege in my mind and I believe that it should constitute a breach of privilege in the mind of every member of this assembly. We have the absolute right, as members of this assembly, to be given access to those documents and access to that announcement at the earliest possible time, not after being prevented from seeing it at the same time that the media would have it released to them.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Government House leader.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Thank you to the member for Welland and the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. In fact, Speakers have ruled in the past that this is not a breach of privilege, nor is it a contempt of the House.

I would note, and I appreciate that the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke actually noted, unlike the member for Welland, who clearly just forgot, that the opposition were offered a briefing today at 2 p.m. The news conference does not happen until 2:30 p.m., and the media is embargoed until 2:30 p.m. So the opposition was offered a briefing, and it is clear that that opportunity is available to them at 2 p.m.

The history of having embargoed media briefings prior to announcements is long held in this House. All parties have done it, and I think that it's disingenuous on behalf of the opposition to raise that as something new and in some way in breach of the rules of this House. I would note for your information that in 2006, the Minister of Energy, Donna Cansfield, announced the first 20-year long-term energy plan. This announcement was not made in the House. It was the beginning of our commitment to a long-term energy plan and a point of order, or a point of privilege, was not raised with respect to that announcement at that time.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I was there for that.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I would also note that I did have the decency of listening to your interjections and remarks, member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. I would hope Mr. Speaker will provide me with the same opportunity.

I would note that in the claim of personal privilege in Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms, it is stated at page 13, section 31, that "statements made outside the House by a member may not be used as the basis for a question of privilege." I would also note that a point of order can only be raised at the time that it happens, and

that in effect, this point of order could be considered premature.

However, more to the point of this particular point of privilege that is being raised by the member for Welland, I would note that in House of Commons Procedure and Practice, Marleau and Montpetit, which the member for Welland usually quotes in this House and is very familiar with—he failed to quote what is on page 379: “A minister is under no obligation to make a statement in the House. The decision of a minister to make an announcement outside of the House instead of making a statement in the House during routine proceedings has been raised as a question of privilege, but the Chair has consistently found there to be no grounds to support a claim that any privilege has been breached.”

Would you like me to repeat that for the House?

Interjection.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I think that’s fairly clear, but I will in fact also—if the member for wherever would allow me—refer you as well, Mr. Speaker, to three other rulings of previous Speakers of this House.

Speaker Turner, in February 1983, on a point of privilege raised by the former member for Renfrew North, Mr. Conway, on the question of some discussions between media and the then Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, Mr. Elgie, stated as follows: “Since Thursday, I have given very careful consideration to the complex aspects of parliamentary privilege as it relates to this matter, and I have had an opportunity to review the rulings of a number of Speakers of the House of Commons of Canada on this subject. My ruling deals only with the technical and procedural aspects of the matter and not in any way with the merits of the situation or the allegations; that is, the question which I must decide is not whether or not there was ministerial impropriety but whether the situation or allegations should in fact be considered a matter of privilege.”

Speaker Lamoureux dealt with this matter in a ruling on October 30, 1969. In his ruling, he stated: “The question has often been raised whether parliamentary privilege imposes on ministers an obligation to deliver communications to the public through the House of Commons or to make these announcements or statements in the House rather than outside the chamber. The question has been asked whether honourable members are entitled, as part of the parliamentary privilege, to receive such information ahead of the general public. I can find no precedent to justify this suggestion. There may be, in such circumstances, a question of propriety or a question of courtesy. There may be a grievance. But in my view there cannot be a question of privilege.”

Again, in April 1993, Speaker Warner, in response to a point of order raised by Mr. Eves, the then member for Parry Sound, stated:

“The member will also know that for better or worse there is nothing in our standing orders or procedures which compels ministers to make statements in the House, including budgets, and indeed there is nothing out of order about announcing a budget outside of the House,

and if memory serves, that in fact has occurred in this province.

“But I would reiterate that all matters of substance of a parliamentary nature should be made here. I have no control over making that happen. I can only ask that people do that.”

Again, Speaker Curling in 2005, in response to a point of privilege raised by Mr. Klees, the member for Oak Ridges, stated: “The minister appears to have made an announcement, outside the House, that anticipates a bill and a budgetary measure. But there is nothing wrong with anticipation per se—it happens a lot; the issue is whether the announcement goes further and reflects adversely on the parliamentary process.” He goes on to say that in fact it does not and there is no contempt.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would direct you to all of these precedents as well as, of course, to Marleau and Montpetit, and I would simply state that there is in fact no breach of privilege in this case, no contempt of the House, and what is being undertaken today by the Minister of Energy is completely in order.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I thank the member from Welland, the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and the government House leader. Because this is an issue that I believe needs to be addressed today because of an event taking place this afternoon, I am going to recess the House for five minutes.

The House recessed from 1204 to 1212.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I’d like to thank the member for Welland for raising this issue, and the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and the government House leader for their contributions.

It is a sound and long-standing principle that policy statements and announcements made by government ought to be made in the Legislature, such that members of this assembly are the first to receive the information. As the member for Welland correctly stated in addressing his point of privilege, there is no shortage of examples of Speakers asserting this important principle. For instance, I delivered what I thought was a very comprehensive ruling on this very issue last November 2. Let me quote briefly from that ruling:

This “is but the latest in a long litany of similar points of order raised over the years by members sincerely frustrated by the ongoing tendency of governments to make announcements outside of the Legislative Assembly in advance of, or instead of, informing the House.

“I and my predecessors have repeatedly conveyed our deep concern about how these types of extra-parliamentary announcements erode the stature of Parliament. Speakers have repeatedly implored governments to consider the impact of this erosion and how it damages the reputation of the foundation institution of this province.” Sadly, “these pleas go repeatedly unheard and unheeded....

“Though in no position to do anything about it, like my predecessors, I am sympathetic to the grievance these types of activities raise. Nothing about this is new, and similar complaints have risen from all three parties in this House over the years as their roles have changed from

government to opposition. The Speaker can only suggest that it falls to the players to heal this syndrome of casual diminishments of the legitimate and key role of the opposition and of this House. In reality, only the government of the day is in a position to lead change....”

I’m going to repeat that, because I need this to be heard by all members. The Speaker can only suggest. Then it falls to the players. It falls to you, the members, to heal this syndrome of casual diminishments of the legitimate and key role of the opposition and of this House. In reality, only the government of the day is in a position to lead change on this. I can only confirm my continued adherence to that statement.

While the Speaker cannot compel that statements be made in this House, once again I urge that proper deference to the House should always be a central part of the planning that governments do when they are rolling out announcements of government policy.

As for the matter of briefings and press conferences that are apparently planned for today by the Minister of Energy, as Speakers have noted before, these types of briefings are extra-parliamentary events and, obviously, happen outside the legislative milieu. As such, the Speaker has no jurisdiction over them and can neither insist that any type of briefing or advance information be provided at all, nor when or where it should occur.

I can say, though, that courtesy might dictate that for such an important announcement, such large-scale briefings, if they are to occur, ought to be available to all members who wish to participate. That would be the ideal situation and one likely to produce a more harmonious House. Without doubt, the House always functions more effectively when a basic sense of goodwill underpins the proceedings of this chamber.

Having said that, I must again say that the Speaker has no control in the matter.

The member does raise a valid grievance but not a prima facie case of privilege.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Nickel Belt has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Health Promotion concerning cellphone safety. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

There being no further business, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1217 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: I want to welcome today Bob Gillett, who is the president of Algonquin College. He’s here with us, as is Doug Orendorff, who is a board member for the college and also lives in the great riding of Ottawa Centre. Welcome to Queen’s Park, gentlemen.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I want to welcome a couple of folks in the east gallery. Maureen Piercy is the president of Loyalist College, and Stuart Wright is a board member. Welcome to Queen’s Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would like to take this opportunity to welcome to the Speaker’s gallery today guests who are here for the tribute to former member Keith Norton. In the House today we have family members Donna Nesbitt, sister; Robert Slack; Tracey Nesbitt, niece; Carl Norton, brother; Jean Norton; Wendy Norton; Jayne Mason, niece; Monty Seli; Jacki Wilson, niece; Randy Wilson; and Nicole Stinson, grandniece.

Also, friends and colleagues joining us today: David Corder; June Hicks; Bill Hicks; Kimberley Hicks-Ruttan; Nora Sanders, from the great riding of Elgin–Middlesex–London, I might add; Gina Saccoccio Brannan; Panos Petrides; Bill Noble; Ross Johnstone; Sarah Tothill; David Menaker; Joanne Cook; Robin Barker; Laura Zamprogna; Linden Cress; Susan Preston; Joan MacKenzie Davies; Gillian McCloskey; Simone Scott; Janice Waugh; Afroze Edwards; Barbara Hall, head of our human rights commission; David Evershed; Patricia Evershed; and Dee Dee Heywood.

Also joining us is former Premier Mike Harris, member for Nipissing in the 32nd, 33rd, 34th, 35th, 36th and 37th Parliaments; and former Premier Ernie Eves, former member for Dufferin–Peel–Wellington–Grey and Parry Sound–Muskoka from the 32nd, 33rd, 34th, 35th, 36th, 37th and 38th Parliaments.

Welcome to our two former Premiers and welcome to all of our guests today.

Mr. David Zimmer: I would like to introduce some representatives from the Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario. We have with us the CEO of the organization, Mr. Bill Greenhalgh; Mr. Claude Balthazard, a director; and Mr. J. Scott Allinson, the director of government relations and external relations. I’ll be introducing a private member’s bill relevant to their organization in a few minutes.

MEMBERS’ STATEMENTS

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. John O’Toole: This statement is directed to the Minister of the Environment.

Last night I had a meeting in my riding of Durham with the Lakeridge Citizens for Clean Water. It was an important meeting. The mayor of Scugog, Marilyn Pearce, as well as Mayor-elect Chuck Mercier, along with municipal staff and councillors, were in attendance, as well as staff and council from Uxbridge. A number of staff from the York-Durham Ministry of the Environment district office were in attendance, led by Dave Fumerton, the district manager.

The meeting was arranged by David Langille, a member of the coalition, and was a very well-managed information meeting. The issue at large was the aban-

done gravel pit at 13471 Lakeridge Road, operated by Earthworx. The concern is that the pit being rehabilitated or filled is on the Oak Ridges moraine, and it is on top of an aquifer which is the source of clean water for much of Ontario.

My constituents have been asking the Ministry of the Environment, by email and other means, since May, June and July to investigate the suspicious, potentially contaminated fill. Last night, in frustration and worry about water contamination, they requested, now formally, for Minister Wilkinson to issue a ministerial order for an immediate moratorium before things get worse. Some have called it a catastrophe. It is on the Oak Ridges moraine.

I respectfully and formally ask the minister to stop the filling, take control, clarify the rules and conditions—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

OTTAWA CHINESE COMMUNITY SERVICE CENTRE

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: I was very pleased to attend, this past Saturday evening, the special 35th anniversary gala for the Ottawa Chinese Community Service Centre. It was a great opportunity for our whole community to come together and celebrate the important contributions the OCCSC has made over the past 35 years in Ottawa and to look ahead to the important work they do every day in our city.

This important work helps newcomers and the wider Chinese community in Ottawa with a broad spectrum of engagement. The OCCSC offers settlement, language, employment and well-being services, as well as sports, recreation and dance. It is a testament that their 40 staff and many volunteers serve more than 8,000 people per year in those important areas.

The centre was established in December 1975, and as we approach the 35th anniversary, I'm delighted to take the opportunity to commend and recognize them in our Legislature.

I'd like to offer special thanks to William Joe—Billy Joe, as he's known with much love in our community, has worked extremely hard in our community and was a founding father of this great organization; Shek Ho Chiang, the past president; Sharon Kan, the executive director; Irene Zhou, the current president; and Jonas Ma, the vice-president of the organization.

Congratulations. The gala on Saturday was very well organized and was enjoyed by all.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Randy Hillier: Millicent Patterson is a constituent of mine and she's in her 80s. Like all of us, she requires oxygen to survive. Due to her advanced age, she requires the assistance of technology to provide that oxygen, technology that is powered by electricity.

Before the McGuinty government's Green Energy Act kicked in, her hydro bill was \$200. Now that it has

kicked in, this senior with a fixed income has seen her bill more than double.

This government just keeps piling on new hydro costs, HST, green energy projects, and deals with foreign conglomerates that put more and more pressure on the people of Ontario.

For seniors like Millicent, a time-of-use smart meter would make her life unbearable. In order to pay for her electricity, she and many others must decide to go without food, go without home care or go without a roof over their heads.

It's time that we take a look at the human costs of bad government policy. Premier McGuinty likes to talk about clean air, but he is wilfully ignoring the cost that our citizens are paying for this hare-brained scheme.

Millicent Patterson needs air too, and the Green Energy Act is taking it away from her. I've seen a great many injustices from this government, but this is a new low, and Millicent Patterson will be paying the price.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I just wanted to inform the House that November 20 was the trans day of remembrance.

Trans folk in our communities experience a 41% attempted suicide rate, a 50% poverty rate and a 97% rate of discrimination on the job.

What we have asked in the New Democratic Party is that the two words "gender identity" be added to the Ontario Human Rights Code. I know that we have Barbara Hall with us today, and she has written a letter to the Star asking the same. Only then will our trans folk be truly protected.

The name of my bill, which I've now tabled three times, is Toby's Law. Toby Dancer was her name. Adrian Chornowol was his name before he transitioned. Adrian was one of Canada's foremost musicians. Adrian produced and played on Ian Tyson albums and died an untimely death. We named the bill after her.

The federal government is acting. There is a bill in third reading asking for the same thing across Canada. We're asking that the majority Liberal government here act and do the same. Two small words will add a world of difference to trans people who are suffering in our midst, and those are "gender identity" in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

I feel, as I stand here, that I'm channelling a bit of Keith Norton's spirit in doing so.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mrs. Laura Albanese: While the economy is just beginning to recover, residents of Ontario are still feeling the effects of the global economic crisis. The fall economic statement showed that the McGuinty government is moving forward to create a more prosperous, more attractive and more open Ontario.

In order to aspire to a more prosperous future, our provincial government is investing in the creation of new jobs, while also focusing on reducing the deficit.

In the fall economic statement, it was announced that the 2010-11 deficit projection will be \$18.7 billion, down from the \$19.7 billion forecasted in the 2010 budget. That's almost a 25% improvement from the \$24.7-billion deficit forecasted in the 2009 budget.

The government has laid out a realistic, responsible plan to cut the deficit in half within five years of its highest point and to eliminate it in eight years.

Also, the Conference Board of Canada reported that Ontario's investments last year helped save 70,000 jobs at the height of the global recession.

As the recovery takes hold, Ontario families need to know that our government has a responsible plan to respond to the challenges of today's economy. It showed this in the recent fall economic statement.

1510

LABORATORY SERVICES

Mr. Jim Wilson: I rise to bring to the attention of Premier Dalton McGuinty several emails I have received from constituents affected by the closure of medical laboratories in Tottenham, Stayner and Wasaga Beach.

Pat from Creemore, who used to go to the lab in Stayner, told me that she got an estimate of \$80 to take a cab ride to the laboratory in Wasaga Beach and back.

Eric from Wasaga Beach wrote, "It is a poor situation when a sick or elderly person who has nothing to eat for 12 hours is forced to wait for an extended period and is not even able to sit down due to the lack of space."

Suzanne from Tottenham wrote, "I want to point out that while at the lab in Alliston early in the morning, the lineup was huge and standing room [only] for some of us. I sat on the window ledge and some people were waiting outside."

Denise from Elmvale wrote, "I went on my lunch to have my blood work done, which I thought I had avoided the morning rush. It was one and a half hours from the time I left my office, which is a three-minute drive to the hospital. I had to pay \$4 for parking and lost one hour of pay that day. If the lab was still [open] in Elmvale, I would not have lost one hour pay and would not have had to pay \$4 for parking."

As I've said in this House on several occasions, this situation is unacceptable to me and my constituents. I'm calling on Premier McGuinty to reopen the labs in Tottenham, Stayner and Elmvale to alleviate the pressure at labs in Alliston, Bolton, Collingwood, Wasaga Beach and Midland.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Rick Johnson: Last week, the fall economic statement provided some great news for Ontario families. The McGuinty government is aware that times are tough financially in Ontario and across the globe. Because of this, we have continued to create ways to make lives easier for Ontario families.

The McGuinty government has introduced the Ontario clean energy benefit. This benefit will assist four million residential customers and 400,000 small businesses with their hydro bills. The 10% reduction results in a typical savings of \$150 a year per home, \$1,700 per small business and \$2,000 per farm.

As a response to the economic recession that Ontario has faced in recent years, Ontario's tax plan for jobs and growth will help to create 600,000 jobs within the next 10 years.

It's extremely important to note that 75% of the jobs lost to the global recession have been restored in Ontario. This is compared to only 10% in the United States. Since last spring alone, Ontario has created more than 180,000 new jobs. The McGuinty government has also decreased the projected deficit by 25%, and \$260 million in savings have been identified in the ongoing comprehensive review.

When it comes to the economic recovery, nobody on this side of the House is prepared to declare a victory, but we're demonstrating that with these kinds of investments, tax reforms and prudent fiscal management by this government, Ontario is leading Canada and Canada is leading the world with regard to the economic recovery.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Families are concerned about the rising cost of energy, so our fall economic statement introduced measures that will help make life easier for Ontario families and seniors. We've created the Ontario clean energy benefit, a five-year transitional benefit that will reduce the cost of energy for small businesses, farms and families by 10%. This important credit adds to measures that were previously announced, like the Ontario energy and property tax credit and the northern Ontario energy credit. The McGuinty government understands that every little bit helps during lean times.

Over the next 20 years, energy rates are expected to increase an average of three-and-a-half per cent per year. These cost increases are necessary to modernize Ontario's energy production and transmission capacity. Under the Tories, this province saw no investment in energy production. By contrast, our government has made record investments in clean energy production, and we're on track to shut down the dirty coal-fired plants that pollute our environment, causing billions of dollars in health costs annually. By 2015, we will have eliminated a total of 35 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions.

Finally, we're making major investments in solar power and wind energy. These investments will ensure that Ontario families and seniors can rely on clean, affordable—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. David Zimmer: The official opposition likes to play partisan games in this Legislature, but their

hypocrisy will reach a new peak when we debate their motion on stranded debt this afternoon. After all, the debt retirement charge was the result of the Conservative government's bungled privatization of our energy sector; and our residential stranded debt was the result of years of energy mismanagement by Conservative and, yes, NDP governments who refused to even acknowledge, let alone confront, the problem facing our energy sector. Instead, the Conservative government shifted billions in stranded debt onto the backs of Ontario families and, before their time was up, managed to add yet another billion dollars in debt.

The McGuinty government, on the other hand, has made the responsible decisions that have allowed us to pay down that debt by a billion dollars a year each year since 2004. On the contrary, we are making the necessary investments to build a clean, robust energy system that will meet tomorrow's demand. We've made the tough choices, and while we haven't always done the easy thing, I'm very proud to say we've always done the right thing for Ontario families and seniors to ensure clean, reliable electricity and to help them plan for future needs.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I beg leave to present a Report on the Delayed Release of MPPs from the 2010 Budget Lock-up from the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly and move the adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: At this time, I'll move adjournment of the debate.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Mr. Peter Kormos: On division.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Carried on division.

Debate adjourned.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

REGISTERED HUMAN RESOURCES PROFESSIONALS ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LES PROFESSIONNELS EN RESSOURCES HUMAINES INSCRITS

Mr. Zimmer moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 138, An Act respecting the Human Resources Professionals Association / Projet de loi 138, Loi con-

cernant l'Association des professionnels en ressources humaines.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Mr. David Zimmer: Briefly, the Human Resources Professional Association is Ontario's leading human resources thought leader, with more than 20,000 members. The largest association of its kind in the country, it regulates the HR profession in Ontario and issues the "certified human resources professional" designation, the national standard of excellence in human resource management. Its membership directly impacts 1.9 million employees and 8,000 organizations in Ontario out of a labour force of just seven million.

HRPA is celebrating its 75th year and is currently guided by a 20-year-old private act. Today, I'm proud to introduce the Registered Human Resources Professionals Act, 2010. The association and its members are seeking a new act to enhance its current regulatory authority to ensure that the quality of the HR profession in Ontario will serve the interests of all employers and employees in Ontario by ensuring greater public transparency.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Using the Speaker's prerogative, I'd like to welcome a couple of guests of mine from Fanshawe College here today: Howard Rundle, president of the college, and Britta Winther, chair of the board of governors. Welcome to Queen's Park.

KEITH NORTON

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent that up to five minutes be allotted to each party to speak in remembrance of the late Keith Norton.

1520

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's indeed an honour and a privilege to stand on behalf of the New Democratic Party and to speak about one of the heroes of this Legislature.

This was a man who served for 10 years as MPP for Kingston and the Islands from 1975 to 1985. He tried again in 1990, unsuccessfully. But really, the reason I stand here and call him a hero has somewhat to do with his service to the people of Ontario, but has a great deal more to do with his personal bravery. For you see, Keith Norton—and this is in the words of Eric Dowd, our journalist emeritus here, who said that he's a landmark in Ontario because he was the first openly gay candidate who had such a high profile. He held five cabinet positions in his days here in the Legislature and then ran again as an openly gay man in what is now Toronto Centre.

I want to paint a bit of a picture about the era in which he lived and breathed and had his being, because I lived and breathed and had my being in it, too. I remember growing up in a very United Church household, as did he. In fact, he wanted to preach at one point in the United Church. Around my dining room table at home were red Tories and were Tommy Douglas CCF/NDPers, so there were lots of really ardent debates going on, from fiscal conservatives who were nationalists and socially progressive, and social progressives who were occasionally fiscally conservative. In that conversation, into which occasionally a very brave Liberal appeared from parts of the family, there was discussion about a whole range of topics, but unfortunately—I have to say this; I'm a kid of the 1950s and the 1960s—there was also a great deal of entrenched homophobia. That was the reality of many of our upbringings and that was across party lines. We were all guilty of it back then.

He grew up in a period when there were bathhouse raids; when John Damien, if you remember that name, was fired from the racetrack because he was gay. It wasn't until 1986 that sexual orientation was added to the Ontario Human Rights Code. It was fitting, I think, that later in his life, in 1996, Keith Norton became the first openly gay chief commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

It was the era when AIDS was a scourge and was blamed on the LGBTTT community. That was the era. It was an era when, in 1988, the United Church ordained the first openly gay and lesbian people; that a third of the church members, particularly in rural areas, which is where Keith was from, left the church—walked, never to return. I remember it well because I'm a United Church minister, and in 1991 I was privileged to perform the first legalized same-sex marriage in Ontario. But it didn't come without a cost. The cost was death threats, the cost was ostracization—and that was in 2001, so I can only imagine what Keith lived through and lived with in his era.

But it didn't stop him. He never hid it. To the great, good fortune and wisdom of Premier Mike Harris, who I know is here, it didn't matter to his cabinet either, and that truly is a kudos, because Keith Norton was truly a Progressive Conservative. That's who he was, and I remember that voice.

It is an honour to stand and to welcome our esteemed guests, the Premiers; Barbara Hall, commissioner; and relatives. Thank you for sharing such a hero with us for all of those years. Thank you for sharing him because we know here better than anyone what it costs to be here. We know the hours, the work. We know all of that, and we didn't have to come out in 1990 the way he did. Most of us have grown-up or lived now in a much kinder and gentler province.

I have to say that when I posed on the grand staircase, it was a very unusual portrait for a little NDP girl here, to stand there with two Conservative Premiers, Mike Harris and Ernie Eves, a group of Conservatives—hopefully with some red Tories in their midst, and maybe the

occasional brave Liberal was standing on that staircase too—and it sort of felt like I was home again. But it's a kind of home that I can now live in comfortably, and I can live in it comfortably because it's no longer a homophobic home because of the likes of heroes like Keith Norton.

Hon. John Gerretsen: I feel very honoured and privileged today to speak on behalf of the government and Premier McGuinty on the passing of Keith Norton, not only a former member from Kingston and the Islands, but also a very close and good friend of mine for the 15 years that he lived in Kingston.

Keith and I first met at Joyceville Penitentiary. Yes, we were both at Joyceville Penitentiary back in 1971 when we were both involved with groups called Ten Plus and Five Plus. These were basically individuals from the community who would every so often go into the penitentiaries—and we've got seven of them in the Kingston area—to try to bring some sort of normalization to the inmates that were there. We met there and became good friends.

We also ran independently in the municipal election of December 1972 and we were both elected at that time. Together with a number of other newly elected councillors, we literally opened up the system of local government in Kingston. All committees that were basically private affairs before that, behind closed doors, were opened up. The following year, the young bucks that we were in our early 30s, we took over the so-called finance committee and thereby basically, more or less, ran the municipal council of the city of Kingston for the following three or four years, much more to the chagrin of the much more senior members. But I think that the city was better for it, and if it hadn't been for the leadership of Keith Norton, it simply wouldn't have happened.

I remember how many a time, both when he was a municipal councillor and later on as a member of this Legislature, he would have dinner at my house. He was a single individual. I was young and married. As a matter of fact, there was the odd occasion when he would babysit our children, including, I should say, my son, Mark, who now happens to be the mayor of the city of Kingston.

In 1975, when Syl Apps, who was an excellent member from the Kingston area, left after having served for 13 years, Keith ran to be the Conservative nominee and later on he became the member. My Liberal friends here may not like this, but my wife and I completely and totally supported Keith Norton during his election campaigns in the late 1970s and early 1980s because he was a red Tory. He was a fiscal Conservative, but on most social issues he was extremely progressive.

Let me give you one example. He served for a while as Minister of Community and Social Services in this Legislature, and as a matter of fact it was during that time that I believe I was in here for the first time. He was in that position from 1977 to 1981, and he brought into government people such as former family court judge George Thomson. He basically brought in George to take

a look at what we called the Deserted Wives' and Children's Maintenance Act, and brought our family law support legislation into the 20th century. Of course, we all know of the tremendous contribution that George Thomson made, both here and federally, as deputy minister under all governments of all the various stripes during that period of time and afterwards.

Those are just some of the things that he was involved in. I could go on and on about so many other issues that he was involved in over time. We've heard about the tremendous contribution that he made in the whole human rights legislation, both here and federally etc.

I was very pleased to attend his memorial service, although not pleased to be there because he died way too young a man. It was great to see, at the Trinity St. Paul's United Church on Bloor Street back in February, so many people from this community in Toronto, but also so many people from the Kingston community attend that. I can tell you, in the 15 years that I've been here, I don't think there's been a larger gathering than there is today to witness this occasion in paying tribute to him.

I can remember at the time, for example, Premier Mike Harris spoke and Senator Hugh Segal, who, of course, resides in the Kingston area as well. Many of his friends from Kingston remembered the heydays of the late 1970s and early 1980s, when we truly had, I believe, a Progressive Conservative government here in the province of Ontario, when we truly had red Tories who made sure that the laws that needed to change, that hadn't been changed in many, many years, were changed. He was an instrumental part in that, as a matter of fact.

1530

Let me just give you a couple of quotes of what people say about my good friend Keith Norton.

"He had high ideals about the laws of our country," and he was "passionate about stopping any abuse of children." That was said by his friend Bev Anderson, an individual I know extremely well as well.

Premier Dalton McGuinty said at that time: "It's difficult to overstate Keith Norton's influence for good in Ontario," and that is certainly so, in every way.

A crown attorney in Kingston currently, Ross Drummond, who used to work with him in his constituency office back in the 1970s states—and he just repeats a small, little story as to what kind of an individual Keith Norton was in our community: "All his work came from the heart," says Ross Drummond, recalling an instance when a man came into Keith's constituency office seeking help—no money, no food and nowhere else to turn. "At that late hour there were no agencies open to assist. Keith didn't think twice. He took this man to a store and bought him enough groceries to get through. That's the Keith Norton I mourn and will miss."

That's stated by Ross Drummond. I, as a friend of his for his many years in Kingston, can certainly attest to that as well.

This province, this Legislature and our society are the worse for the fact that he has left us. Let us just pay tribute to an outstanding individual, regardless of partisan

stripes, who contributed to the welfare of this province from which future generations will benefit.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I'll be sharing my time, on behalf of the PC caucus, with the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills.

Keith Norton's life was marked by his inner strength, his courage and his sense of conviction. As president of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, as chief commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, Keith fought each and every day on behalf of the disabled and the elderly, and he stood up for the marginalized in society.

He led the fight against ageism in Ontario in starting the dialogue that eventually did away with mandatory retirement in our province. He fought for the rights of the disabled, promoting accessibility and helping to create guidelines for accessible education in Ontario. And he advanced the cause of gay and lesbian rights, both in his own example and leadership and by fighting for those rights throughout his time as chief commissioner of the Human Rights Commission after being appointed by Premier Mike Harris.

Keith had an early start at the podium. There are stories that, as far back as age 16, Keith would fill in for the minister at Claremont United Church in his hometown. He'd ascend to the pulpit, and the minister would say later that his public speaking took the same theme of those services: public stewardship.

In 1975, just in his early 30s, Keith Norton won the riding of Kingston and the Islands, and he soon became known as the boy wonder of Premier Davis's governments, holding down and excelling in pretty well every significant social cabinet post, from health to environment to education. In fact, the media, because of his success and the prominent role he played, dubbed him "the minister of everything."

As education minister, Keith fought for parents to have a place and a say in their child's education. As a local member, he oversaw major reconstructions at the Kingston hospital and at Queen's University, where he went to law school.

Keith will always be known for his unwavering commitment to the public good. He was truly a champion for his constituents and for the underdog.

When he announced he was returning to politics in 1990 to run as a Mike Harris candidate in that election, he did so as an openly gay politician. As Randall Pearce, a former federal PC candidate and former communications director under Prime Minister Mulroney, recently wrote in the *Globe and Mail*: "For Mr. Norton, coming out in the 1990 election wasn't cynical. It was cathartic. He was a man completely comfortable in his skin. I recall him telling a bunch of us one night how he had been out to his family since he was a young adolescent. He never made any pretence to be anything other than who he was."

In that column, Randall continues that because of Keith Norton's decision to come out of the closet in

1990, "I never had to be in the closet, politically speaking."

I got to know Keith very well over the last number of years. I considered him a friend, a trusted adviser, a confidante. It was a very proud moment when he endorsed my bid to be leader of the Ontario PC Party.

I remember very clearly the last time that I saw Keith. It was last September. His long-time friend and adviser Gina Brannan had a barbecue in her backyard with her husband, Gord. It was a great night, one of those beautiful fall evenings. It was an outstanding barbecue. Of course, a touch of Ontario wine was served that night as well. Keith was his usual witty self, reminiscing about politics, telling all the old war stories from the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, the challenges of today, and always, in his own way, giving his quiet but powerful insight and advice to me as leader of our party. Though he must have been suffering at that time from the disease that would fell him a few months later, he remained strong in his own private way. He didn't tell any of us; he wouldn't have wanted us to worry.

That same strength that carried him through his battle with cancer was the strength that carried him through his life, inspires us today and made him a legend within our party and within our country: fighting for the elderly, fighting for the disabled, fighting for the marginalized in society, and being a champion to all who needed him.

We miss Keith Norton. We'll never forget him.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I first met Keith in 1977 when I was elected, as a very junior member, to the PC minority government. I got to know Keith quite well very quickly. In those days we had night sittings on two nights of the week, and if any members were in the Legislature, there was usually debate going on in the legislative chamber and a card game going on upstairs, and Keith Norton participated in both the legislative debate and the card game upstairs. Sometimes he participated in the card game in a very, very skilled way, but sometimes not. He wasn't that good at euchre, and Premier Harris was telling me earlier today that he often lost late into the night.

The respect that caucus had for Keith was immediate. When Keith talked, he talked about subjects which he had read about. He had great intellect, as well as being a wonderful people person.

In 1978-79, as parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General, Mr. McMurtry, I brought forward the first Family Law Reform Act that this province had ever seen, and my friend referred to that. Keith, as the Minister of Community and Social Services, worked with me and Mr. McMurtry to make certain that this passed into law, notwithstanding that we were in a minority Parliament at that time. His knowledge and help was greatly appreciated.

In 1981, I became a cabinet minister when Keith then became the environment minister. It soon became obvious in the cabinet that Keith had the same kind of respect that he carried outside of cabinet. When Keith spoke, people listened. In many ways, he was a social conscience for the cabinet.

One of his great friends of the day was Dr. Bette Stephenson, the education minister—a great friend of Mr. Eves, as well, and of Mr. Harris, who were elected first in 1981. I phoned Bette a few days ago to ask her what I might say to the Legislature today in honour of Keith Norton. Bette said, "He wasn't a Progressive Conservative. He was a progressive Progressive Conservative." That was her description of him.

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At that time, the structure of cabinet meetings was a little different than it is today. We used to have policy fields: The social policy field was one, the resource policy field was one and the justice policy field was the other. In the social policy field, Mr. Norton and Bette Stephenson dominated that particular policy field. They were to the point because they trusted each other and were looking out for each other and for the people of Ontario, to such a degree that they were actually in the stages of negotiating substantial changes within the different portfolios so that services could be brought to the people of Ontario in a better manner. Unfortunately, that did not come to fruition, and I think we still suffer from the fact that they weren't able to bring that to a conclusion.

Mr. Norton, notwithstanding that he was compassionate and concerned very much about the poorer people in Ontario, the people who needed help, was a fiscal conservative, as has been said before. I found it strange that Ms. DiNovo would bring forward the example of Tommy Douglas, who often is misunderstood as a socialist, who may be described today in terms of spending and fiscal restraint. Tommy Douglas perhaps was more of a progressive Progressive Conservative than he was a socialist. He was a Premier who balanced a budget 17 years out of 17 as Premier in that province. So the comparison between the two is not without some validity.

He had these challenging ministries, as was mentioned before, the really big ones, the ones with big budgets, big problems. I mean, community and social services, education and health probably make up about 80% of our total budget. Keith lost the election in May 1985. I think one of the reasons that he lost that particular election was that he was the education minister at the time. Unfortunately, he held the responsibility for bringing full funding to Catholic schools, which was not popular, quite frankly, with a lot of Progressive Conservative supporters. I've always thought that that was perhaps the reason that Keith Norton lost at that time. I don't think it was a recognition by the people of Kingston and the Islands that he wasn't a wonderful representative.

From the day he lost that election in 1985 until the day he died, he remained a party loyalist. You could call Keith Norton at any time and ask him to do something for you and he would try to do that for you, and he would do it with class and style. Already mentioned was his tremendous leadership as president of the Human Rights Tribunal and the Ontario Human Rights Commission. I talked to him at the times that he was serving on those particular boards and he explained to me that his greatest

challenge was to make them more relevant, to give quicker decisions and to be much more efficient. He was able to do that, and I think that we have to continue within those kinds of tribunals to seek those improvements as we go forward. He was an excellent example of someone who could still bring human rights, defend the disabled, make certain that discrimination did not occur in our province or country, but seek efficiencies at the same time.

Keith was an amazing politician in this regard: He was, not only as a politician but as a person in charge of running the Human Rights Tribunal, never jealous of his jurisdiction. Often I have found in politics, as many do, that people who are in charge of a ministry or in charge of a commission become overly jealous of their jurisdiction. All Keith wanted to do was make certain that his client, the citizen, the complainant in a Human Rights Tribunal case, found the quickest and best and speediest and fairest resolution to the problem. That's the way he thought.

One of the last times I saw Keith was about two years ago, at the funeral of Marnie Johnston, the wife of former MPP Jack Johnson, who has also unfortunately passed as well since that time. I thought it kind of strange that Keith would be there, since his separation from Jack would have been over 20 years, but it was not unusual for Keith to continue caring about the people he cared about and loved in the past. He was a great friend of Jack in this Legislature and he wanted to go there to comfort him on the day of the funeral of Jack's wife. When I talked to him at that funeral, he was very much interested in what our party was doing and how many of the members that he knew were doing as well.

As has been stated, Keith was very comfortable with himself. He was a casual man; in fact, often I wondered how many days in a row he could wear the same sports jacket to cabinet or to this Legislature. He really didn't care that much about that particular part of what he was doing, yet he could look very elegant at an evening dinner somewhere. But he had this casual air around him that would make you want to invite him to your dinner table. You would love to have a conversation with him because he was always interested, he was always interesting, and he knew what he was talking about.

We've lost a great Ontarian. I want to thank his family for sharing him with the people of Ontario. You can be so, so proud of him. I want to thank all of his friends, his family and my former colleagues for coming here to honour and celebrate a great life.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to thank the honourable members for their contributions as we've celebrated the life of former member Keith Norton, and to thank the family and the friends who have joined us here at the Legislature today. On behalf of the Ontario Legislature, I'd like to express our condolences to the family and to his friends. Copies of the Hansard and a DVD of today's proceedings will be sent to each of you as a memento of this special day here at the Legislature. Thank you all very much for coming today.

PETITIONS

PENSION PLANS

Mr. Khalil Ramal: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Pension Benefits Act (PBA) regulations for 'loss of sponsor' of defined benefit pension plans only permit windup and annuity purchase; and

"Whereas in the present economic climate the cost of annuities is at a 25-year high with no relief in sight;

"Therefore the purchase of annuities exacerbates the punitive impact of windup on Nortel pension plan members and others in similar situations, and increases the costs passed on to the taxpayers of Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To amend the PBA regulations to permit the administrator and the Financial Services Commission of Ontario (FSCO) to apply other options in the 'loss of sponsor' scenario which will provide more benefits to Nortel pension plan members and others in similar situations, such as the continuation of the pension plan under responsible financial management by a non-government institution."

This petition was given to me by one of my constituents, Mr. Chuck McEwan. I want to sign it and give it to page Kyle.

POWER PLANT

Mrs. Julia Munro: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government has cancelled the Oakville peaker plant, citing a decrease in need for power in that community, proposing to meet needs by better transmission, and despite the fact that the government may face a \$1-billion lawsuit due to the cancellation;

"Whereas the King township peaker plant is going forward, with the Ontario government having shut off debate about the plan at the OMB through regulation, after failing to provide a proper environmental assessment or community consultation;

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"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To give the King township peaker plant and the local community the same consideration as residents of Oakville, and to decide on the future of the peaker plant on a non-partisan basis."

I've affixed my signature to this and given to it page William.

CHILD CUSTODY

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition to read on behalf of my seatmate, the member for Niagara Falls. To that

end, I'd like to thank a number of people who have signed this and sent it to him from the city of Chatham.

It reads as follows:

"Whereas grandparents often become a family's first reserves in times of crisis. Grandparents act as fun playmates for children, role models and family historians, mentors, and help establish self-esteem and security for children.

"One potential aspect of the divorce is the disruption or severance of the grandparent-grandchild relationship.

"Also, in cases of the death of a parent (the maternal or paternal grandparents' child), grandparents should continue to enjoy access to their grandchildren by the living parent, as visitation and access was fully established prior to death of parent;....

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That grandparents have legal rights to access and visitation with their grandchildren in the event of parental divorce or death of a parent."

I'm pleased to affix my signature on this petition and to send it down with page Jennifer.

MUNICIPAL PLANNING

Mr. Randy Hillier: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the McGuinty government has effectively neutered municipal authority and local decision-making through legislation and policies such as the provincial policy statement, 2005, and the Green Energy and Green Economy Act; and

"Whereas it is an affront to democracy to remove local input and authority from the decision-making process on matters that directly affect municipalities and property owners;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government change the necessary legislation and regulations to restore municipal planning authority on matters affecting their communities and property owners."

I agree with this petition and will hand it off to Alexandra.

BRITISH HOME CHILDREN

Mr. Jim Brownell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas, between 1869 and 1939, more than 100,000 British home children arrived in Canada from group homes and orphanages in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland; and

"Whereas the story of the British home children is one of challenge, determination and perseverance; and

"Whereas due to their remarkable courage, strength and perseverance, Canada's British home children endured and went on to lead healthy and productive lives

and contributed immeasurably to the development of Ontario's economy and prosperity; and

"Whereas the government of Canada has proclaimed 2010 as the Year of the British Home Child and Canada Post will recognize it with a commemorative stamp;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Enact Bill 12, a private member's bill introduced by MPP Jim Brownell on March 23, 2010," an act to proclaim September 28 of each year as British Home Child Day.

As I agree with this petition, I shall sign it and send it to the clerks' table.

ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr. Toby Barrett: A petition entitled Haldimand-Norfolk Needs an OSPCA Chapter:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the establishment of a local Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) could help deal with the brutality and neglect of horses and other large animals; and

"Whereas the Ontario government could provide training for the Ontario Provincial Police to deal with animal abuse issues;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that the Ontario government request the establishment of an OSPCA chapter in Haldimand-Norfolk to provide the two counties with support in cases of animal abuse and neglect."

I think that's a good idea, and I'll sign this.

VETERANS

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I've been given this petition by one of my constituents. The petition says:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas with turmoil and fighting around the globe, what better time to remember the price our veterans paid for freedom than the 65th anniversary of the end of World War II; and

"Whereas we also remember and honour our present-day veterans and all who have paid the ultimate price fighting for the freedoms we enjoy in this great nation;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Dalton McGuinty government declare November 11 a provincial holiday to honour our veterans of past and present; as well as all the soldiers of today who currently fight to defend our freedoms."

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. John O'Toole: I have a petition from my constituents in the riding of Durham, which reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario government is cutting front-line health care at pharmacies, which could mean higher prices, less service and even store closures for us;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

Premier McGuinty, "stop the cuts to front-line health care at our pharmacies now."

I'm pleased to sign and support this, and present it to Emily, one of the pages.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Sudbury, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning, a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients; and

"Whereas," since October 2009, "insured PET scans" are performed "in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

"We ... petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Gabriella to send it down.

CEMETERIES

Mr. Jim Brownell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario Historical Society, founded in 1888, is a not-for-profit corporation, incorporated by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario April 1, 1899, with a mandate to identify, protect, preserve and promote Ontario's history; and

"Whereas protecting and preserving Ontario's cemeteries is a shared responsibility and the foundation of a civilized society; and

"Whereas the Legislature failed to enact Bill 149, the Inactive Cemeteries Protection Act, 2009, which would have prohibited the relocation of inactive cemeteries in the province of Ontario; and

"Whereas the Cooley-Hatt Cemetery (circa 1786) is located in the Niagara Escarpment plan within Ontario's greenbelt plan in Ancaster, city of Hamilton; and

"Whereas this is one of the earliest surviving pioneer cemeteries in Ontario, with approximately 99 burials, including at least one veteran of the War of 1812;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The government of Ontario must take whatever action is necessary to prevent the desecration of any part of this sacred burial ground for real estate development."

As I agree with this petition, I shall sign it and send it to the clerks' table.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Jim Wilson: I have a petition to save medical laboratory services in Stayner, Elmvale and Tottenham:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the consolidation of medical laboratories in rural areas is causing people to travel further and wait longer for services; and

"Whereas it is the responsibility of the Ontario government to ensure that Ontarians have equal access to all health care services; and

"Whereas rural Ontario continues to get shortchanged when it comes to health care: doctor shortages, smaller hospitals, less pharmaceutical services, lack of transportation and now medical laboratory services; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government continues to increase taxes to make up for misspent tax dollars, collecting \$15 billion over the last six years from the Liberal health tax, ultimately forcing Ontarians to pay more while receiving less;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government stop the erosion of public health care services and ensure equal access to medical laboratories for all Ontarians."

I certainly agree with this petition, and I will sign it.

HYDRO RATES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Guelph. It is extremely short, but effective. It goes as follows:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Be it resolved that Dalton McGuinty immediately exempt electricity from the harmonized sales tax (HST)." It's simple.

I support this petition and will affix my name to it.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS TREATMENT

Mr. Jim Brownell: I have a petition, and it reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas thousands of people suffer from multiple sclerosis;

"Whereas there is a treatment for chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency, more commonly called CCSVI, which consists of a corrective angioplasty, a well-known, universally practised procedure that is low-risk and at relatively low expense; and

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"Whereas while more research is needed, MS patients should not need to await such results;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario allow people with multiple sclerosis to obtain the venoplasty that so impacts their quality of life and that of their family and caregivers.”

I shall sign this petition and send it to the clerks' table.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr. Norm Miller: I have a number of petitions in support of Bill 100, paved shoulders on provincial highways. These are mainly from the Thunder Bay area. They read:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas pedestrians and cyclists are increasingly using secondary highways to support healthy lifestyles and expand active transportation; and

“Whereas paved shoulders on highways enhance public safety for all highway users, expand tourism opportunities and support good health; and

“Whereas paved shoulders help to reduce the maintenance cost of repairs to highway surfaces; and

“Whereas Norm Miller's private member's Bill 100 provides for a minimum one-metre paved shoulder for the benefit of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That Norm Miller's private member's Bill 100, which requires a minimum one-metre paved shoulder on designated highways, receive swift passage through the legislative process.”

I support this.

REPLACEMENT WORKERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Nickel Belt.

“Whereas strikes and lockouts are rare: on average, 97% of collective agreements are negotiated without work disruption; and

“Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers laws have existed in Quebec since 1978; in British Columbia since 1993; and successive governments in those two provinces have never repealed those laws; and

“Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers legislation has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes; and

“Whereas the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout is damaging to the social fabric of a community in the short and the long term as well as the well-being of its residents;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation banning the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Emily to bring it to the clerks.

CEMETERIES

Mr. Jim Brownell: I have a petition that reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario's cemeteries are an important part of our cultural heritage, and Ontario's inactive cemeteries are constantly at risk of closure and removal; and

“Ontario's cemeteries are an irreplaceable part of the province's cultural heritage;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“The government must pass Bill 149, the Inactive Cemeteries Protection Act, 2009, to prohibit the relocation of inactive cemeteries in the province of Ontario.”

As I agree with this, I shall sign it and send it to the clerks' table.

OPPOSITION DAY

HYDRO CHARGES

Mr. Norm Miller: I move that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario calls for the current balance and amount paid to date of the residual stranded debt be displayed in the annual report of the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp. and on hydro bills so Ontario families will know how much longer they will pay the debt retirement charge.

That's addressed to the Minister of Finance.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member has provided the motion and has a chance to speak to it.

Mr. Norm Miller: Premier McGuinty's energy experiments, from smart meters and time-of-use rates to the Green Energy Act and the Samsung subsidy, have electricity bills skyrocketing. Electricity rates are already up 75% under his watch. Adding the impact of the HST, backdoor energy taxes and other rate hikes, the annual cost of electricity bills for Ontario families is set to increase by a staggering \$732 by 2015. All the while, Ontario families, on every single electricity bill they get, are paying for the debt retirement charge.

The retirement charge is a dedicated revenue stream that pays for a debt stretching as far back as the Peterson era. In 2002, when Ontario families first started paying for the charge, the total bill for the residual stranded debt was \$7.8 billion. The debt repayment plan was scheduled to end in 2012, but under the McGuinty Liberals there has been very little transparency surrounding the debt retirement charge and how it pays down the residual stranded debt.

Almost all electricity users in Ontario pay the debt retirement charge on their electricity consumption, a cost of between \$5.60 and \$7 on the average monthly bill. To date, a total of \$7.8 billion has been collected from Ontario families, or about \$1 billion a year since 2002,

putting Ontario right on schedule to hit the 2012 target date of paying it off. Those same families are asking, "How much more do we have to pay?" The answer is, the Liberals have pushed back the repayment date twice, first to 2014 and now to 2015.

In response to skyrocketing electricity bills, the Premier announced that he was going to give Ontario families a small-drop-in-the-bucket credit, one year away from an election: the so-called Ontario clean energy benefit, a \$1-billion credit that will cost taxpayers more than \$1 billion to pay for. Of course, this is nothing more than an elaborate bait and switch, a shell game that takes money from one taxpayer to pay another. A better idea would be to actually pay off the debt and do away with the debt retirement charge. After all, the charges were supposed to pay for the \$7.8-billion residual stranded debt, the same amount of money they've collected to date.

If Premier McGuinty won't agree to retire the debt retirement charge, then he should come clean and tell Ontario families just how much they have paid to date and how much more they have to pay. Put the bill on the bill. Print the total paid and total owing in the annual report of the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp.

But instead of coming clean and explaining the reason the electricity bills of Ontario families are skyrocketing, the McGuinty Liberals would rather conduct a campaign of misinformation. In fact, a confidential document from the Sussex Strategy Group, based upon government insider information, said that it would be necessary to confuse the public and the media about those costs. So they have a deliberate plan to keep Ontario families in the dark about the true costs of the Liberals' failed experiments and mismanagement.

That is why I'm bringing this motion forward today on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus and our leader, Tim Hudak. Ontario families deserve to know where the debt retirement charge money went, they deserve to know how much more is owed, and they deserve to see what is remaining of the charge, printed in black and white, on each and every bill.

It is about transparency and accountability in electricity pricing. It is about simply telling Ontario families what they have paid so far and how much longer they will be paying the bill.

Instead of being transparent, instead of telling Ontario families just how much longer they will be paying the debt retirement charge, the McGuinty Liberals would rather try and confuse Ontario families.

It's time for Dalton McGuinty to come clean on the costs of his government's mismanagement. Release the amount of the residual stranded debt paid to date, tell us how much longer we will be paying the debt retirement charges, and come clean with Ontario families wondering where all their money went.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I think that posting this information about the debt retirement charge on people's electri-

city bills makes a lot of sense. I think that people need to be aware of where that debt came from and how that debt is handled from year to year by the government of the day.

The report of the crown corporation set up by the government of Ontario in March 2000 identified that of the \$20 billion in debt that Ontario electricity consumers are paying for, \$15 billion of that came from nuclear power plants, either their overruns in initial construction or from the fact that those plants had stopped functioning 15 years before the end of their expected lifespan. Thus, people were stuck with a bill for these assets that weren't producing revenue.

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People in Ontario need to know that that stranded debt arises from a decision about a particular technology that was taken in this province and that proved to be extraordinarily costly. As you may well be aware, the Darlington nuclear power plant, which was planned at the end of the 1970s to cost somewhere in the \$3-billion to \$4-billion range, ultimately came in at a cost of about \$13 billion to \$14 billion. The cost of that plant was extraordinarily high. It was very expensive for the people of Ontario, very expensive for the ratepayers of Ontario.

When the Harris government looked at privatizing the power system at the end of the 1990s, they realized they couldn't sell those assets with those liabilities attached because no one would buy them. So that exercise in privatization, which I disagree with, led to an identification of the amount of debt that arose from that investment in nuclear power plants that could not be carried by the sale of power from those plants. That, when you pay your hydro bill, is your legacy from that adventure in nuclear investment. You are paying three quarters of that debt retirement charge to deal with the costs of dead nuclear. I think it's too late for me to amend this resolution, but it would be useful to have as a complete wording "the nuclear debt retirement charge line" on the bills and the explanation of how much is left to pay on those bills.

When you look at the history of the paying off of that debt, when the whole debt was set up, hived off from our hydro operations in 1999, the amount of debt was around \$19 billion that was going to be carried through those charges. That debt did not drop in the year 2000 or the year 2001 or the year 2002 or the year 2003 or the year 2004. It looks like in 2005 it still had not been addressed, even though the government had changed in 2003. That charge, which initially was for nuclear power, also included the cost of having a rate freeze here in Ontario. Much like the government of the day, the McGuinty government, money was borrowed to pay to write down electricity costs. It will be interesting to hear how the Liberal government deals with this resolution, because, in fact, just like the Conservatives they oppose, they are quite willing to borrow money to subsidize hydro bills. You know, they can attack, but given they are doing exactly what they are criticizing, I look forward to the ingenuity that they apply to their argument.

Today we had the opportunity to hear the Minister of Energy, Brad Duguid, bring forward his new energy plan.

For those who were there—journalists, the public, those who are interested in energy issues—to see that the Minister of Energy could, with a straight face, say that the cost of the nuclear investment in this province to meet his goals would be \$33 billion was quite an extraordinary thing. It's as if there is a complete amnesia about what happened in the years from 1960 to 2000. It was as if the debt retirement charge was something that was a distant, unknown entity, when in fact the Minister of Energy is proposing that we go down the same road we've gone down before, and, in my expectation and the expectation of many others, with the same result: a large cost overrun, expenses that will be a burden on the public sector and on the finances all of Ontario's economy for decades to come, for generations to come.

I think it's a very good idea to put this charge on the bills so that people know where it came from, know exactly why, or where the money that they're forking out is going to. Hopefully it will have a salutary effect. Hopefully, people who get those bills see that this nuclear debt retirement charge that they're paying every month is about to be refreshed with a whole new range of debt by the Liberal government.

The Minister of Energy said that the cost of his nuclear adventure would be \$33 billion. Everyone in this chamber who read the *Toronto Star* within weeks of George Smitherman, the former Minister of Energy, saying that we couldn't go forward, that he wasn't satisfied with the bids, is well aware that the only price we have that was acceptable to the government—because the bidder was willing to cover any overrun—was \$26 billion. That's for two reactors at the Darlington site. If that's what it costs for two new reactors at the Darlington site, then an estimate of \$33 billion to refurbish 10 reactors and build two new ones is a complete and total fantasy, and the debt retirement charge is a very cold and very sobering reminder of what the real costs of that technology are; the real costs that that technology presents.

We are responsible for representing the interests of the people of this province, for trying to safeguard their interests in the present and for many years to come. It's our responsibility to understand when we have made a major mistake; when we have seen a major mistake carried through and the consequences thrown on our shoulders and the shoulders of this economy, to not repeat that mistake.

So I would say having this further emboldening of the—sorry; English fails me for a moment. I would say that the highlighting of this particular item on energy bills, electricity bills, would make for great debate fodder throughout the province. People could go on open live radio shows and say, "Yes, that debt from the last round of nuclear expenses is what we can expect for the next round." People could go on television shows. They could talk to local journalists, community newspapers. They could talk to student journalists in community colleges and say, "Yes, that debt which is still outstanding, which you are still having to dig in your wallet or your purse to

find the money for, that debt came from nuclear power, and that debt alone is good enough reason for us to not go down that path again."

I think the Conservatives have actually done a service. I think in this resolution they have highlighted the folly of nuclear investment. They've highlighted the folly of continuing to see mid-20th-century technology as the be-all and end-all and have given all of us an opportunity to engage in a very good discussion with the people of this province.

If, in this province, we want to have electricity that is affordable, if we want in this province to have electricity investment that creates employment, that builds our economy, then one should look at the report brought out today by the Minister of Energy, his long-term energy plan, and look at the costs of conservation and efficiency, which are about 30% to 40% less than the price that he has put out for nuclear. So I ask you and I ask the people who are considering these weighty questions: Why on earth are we deciding to go down a path that has already cost us so much and burdened us so heavily when we can see in the government's own plan that there is an alternative that is far more cost-effective?

It is sometimes said that history repeats itself. It is sometimes said that those who do not follow history are doomed to repeat it. Today we have an interesting opportunity before us with this resolution to, in fact, look back at our history and do our best to avoid repeating it.

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The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: I'm pleased to join in the debate today for the opposition motion. The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka wants to talk about residual stranded debt and the debt retirement charge. Well, I'm pleased to do that today.

In fact, I'd like to pick up on a comment that was just made by the member from Toronto–Danforth. It was George Santayana, actually, who said that if we don't remember the past, then we're condemned to repeat it.

I'd like to begin by saying that this government has a responsible long-term plan in place to retire all Ontario Electricity Financial Corp.—I'll refer to it as the OEFC—liabilities from within the electricity sector.

I do think that we need to look at a bit of the history, which the member from Toronto–Danforth was pointing out. I think it will be helpful, when we talk about a debt retirement charge, for the people of Ontario to understand the history of exactly the debt retirement charge.

On April 1, 1999, pursuant to the Electricity Act, 1998, Ontario Hydro was continued as the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp.—or the OEFC, as I said—responsible for managing and retiring the outstanding debt. The debt retirement charge, or the DRC, of 0.7 cents per kilowatt hour came into effect on market opening of May 1, 2002. It was designed to be in place, to be paid to the OEFC, while a residual stranded debt exists, and it will be paid by electricity users until that debt is retired.

The debt retirement charge and the stranded debt are the legacy of years of poor energy policy and planning on

the part of both NDP and Conservative governments, who refused to tackle the difficult issues and artificially subsidized hydro prices on the backs of taxpayers and on the back of the Ontario treasury.

Looking back, so that we're not condemned to repeat those mistakes, the Tories more than doubled our reliance on coal, increasing climate change emissions by 124%. Under their government, 25% of our electricity came from dirty coal. Shockingly, the electricity system lost 1,800 megawatts of power capacity, which is the equivalent to Niagara Falls running dry.

Since taking office, our government has made long-overdue investments in the electricity system infrastructure that were needed in order to keep the lights on. Our government is phasing out coal-fired generation, replacing it with cleaner generation, improving the quality of the air that we breathe and reducing, of course, health care costs.

An interesting statistic, and I think that it's important for the people of Ontario to know this: Shutting down coal generation is equivalent to how many cars, do you think, Madam Speaker, being taken off the road? Again, shutting down coal generation is equivalent to taking how many cars off the road?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: How many? Tell us.

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: How many? Seven million cars.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Seven million cars—wow.

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: Nicely done. Thank you.

How many? Seven million cars off the road is the equivalent to shutting down coal generation.

In order to have a clean, modern, reliable system, we need, of course, to continue to invest in Ontario's electricity system, and, of course, this government is doing that.

Rising electricity prices are having a significant impact on consumers, and I wanted to say that, while absolutely necessary, investments are increasing the cost of electricity.

I wanted to refer to an editorial in the Toronto Star today called "Duncan Message Refreshing." "Clean, reliable power costs money...." Finance Minister Dwight Duncan's piece was "refreshingly candid—'And, if people tell you that they can deliver clean, reliable electricity at a lower price, don't believe them.'"

Every little bit of assistance helps during these lean times. Our government has implemented or proposed several measures to help families and businesses cope with rising electricity costs, including the Ontario energy and property tax credit, which passed third reading in the House today and will allow tax relief for 50,000 new seniors who never saw tax relief on their energy and property taxes, and an increase in relief to 690,000 seniors in the province. That totals 740,000 seniors who will see a benefit of tax relief, as well as three million people in the province of Ontario, as well as the northern Ontario energy credit and the northern industrial electricity rate program, all of these things put in place to support—our government is taking further action to help mitigate electricity costs through the proposed OCEB,

the Ontario clean energy benefit, which would reduce after-tax electricity bills for eligible consumers by 10% for five years. The OCEB would help four million residential consumers, more than 400,000 small businesses and farms. A typical household would save more than \$150 a year, a small business would save more than \$1,700 a year and a farm over \$2,000 a year.

I could go on, and I'd love to, but my time is limited.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Oh, please.

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: No, no, I mustn't. Well, okay, sure—just a couple more seconds.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: One more.

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: Okay, one more.

I did want to highlight that jobs will be created, of course, during all of this: the renewable energy projects, the direct employment, the construction. For instance, solar panel facilities in Guelph, 800 jobs; solar panel manufacturing facilities in Kingston, 1,200 jobs; a solar manufacturing hub in Welland, 1,000 jobs—

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Wow, that's impressive.

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: I know. How exciting. And in my riding of Kitchener-Conestoga, Canadian Solar, with Shawn Qu, the chair, president and chief executive officer—I've had the pleasure of going through his facility—there are more jobs locally and across the province.

I'm going to leave it at that and reassure you that there is a plan in place, a comprehensive plan, one which will keep the lights on in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Durham.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm standing in support of the opposition day motion of our finance critic, the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka, because this story needs to be told. I can only tell you this: There have been two clear admissions in the last week alone that the government has completely failed on the energy file.

I don't want this to come as a shock to consumers, because you're paying more and the smart meters demand that you use less. What we want is more accountability and more transparency. In fact, this is the cynical part of this. Madam Speaker, you've seen this report here, Renewable Energy Matters-Campaign Outline. This was by a consulting group, the Sussex group. This campaign, I think orchestrated by the Liberals, was found in a brown envelope, and our leader, Tim Hudak, got a hold of it. We want this to be out in the open. This was a campaign to confuse the consumers. The consumers are bewildered. Smart meters: The price is up, the price is down.

Now, in the few minutes I have, there were two bills over the last two weeks that have been debated in this House. Each of them was to reduce the cost of energy. One of those bills, Bill 109, An Act to amend the Taxation Act to implement the Ontario energy and property tax credit to make consequential amendments, is to reduce the cost of energy for seniors short-term. We supported that bill. The cost of that of bill is \$1.3 billion per year. This is with a government that's already got a

deficit of over \$18 billion. Secondly, our critic Mr. Miller has also pointed out that Bill 135, which is going to create a 10% reduction in the overall energy bill starting in January, is going to cost the taxpayers another billion dollars a year.

This is really bringing forward more debt to make it look like they're dealing with the energy problem. They have this problem so fouled up, it's unbelievable. This campaign has set out to confuse—and they still owe the \$7.8 billion. If you're looking for any more proof, just read the normal newspapers of the day. The Toronto Star this morning said, "Liberals Ready to Unveil the High Cost of Going Green." They go on here to say clearly that their plan has failed. That's what the article in the Toronto Star says, which is normally very friendly; we call it the Liberal briefing notes.

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The next one is from the National Post. It says, "Green Energy Costs Lowballed, Task Force Says." This report by the competitiveness and productivity economists— independent people—says that even the promise of 50,000 new jobs is a false promise, because it may create 50,000 jobs, but we're losing about 56,000 jobs in manufacturing and steel. Look at US Steel in Hamilton, as an example.

This whole plan, along with a number of other plans—it's frightening what they're doing to Ontario, especially seniors and people on fixed income. They're still stumbling to try and explain the political damage introduced by the hydro bill subsidy. You go along on this whole campaign here and you're pretty clear. All of the clips—new nuclear plants are being announced today. These plans that they're announcing today are very, very long-term. I compliment that. This is long-term, reliable, clean energy—nuclear. In my riding, I'm proud to be home to the Darlington plant, one of the plants that's going to be refurbished. That's a sound decision. But when I turn around and I see them making great news announcements about wind and solar energy at 80 cents a kilowatt hour—who are they fooling? They aren't telling us how they're going to pay for it. This is future debt. When you pay somebody 80 cents per kilowatt hour for a wind turbine that's not working half the time, give them a 20-year contract, and guarantee them that you will buy the power whenever they generate it—and that means you have to turn a nuclear plant off or a natural gas plant off—you're paying twice: You're paying the 80 cents plus the cost for nuclear or natural gas that you're turning off.

Our critic has it right: That opposition day motion needs to be voted on to make the people of Ontario at least aware of the mistakes the McGuinty government has made on this file.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I'm delighted to stand up and speak about this motion, to talk about the electricity issue in the province of Ontario. It's important to our government and important to the people of Ontario.

The member's outline about how we have to outline and tell the people of Ontario about the expenses and about the debt, that it should be reported on an annual basis—which happens on a yearly basis. The authority in charge of this issue annually reports how much debt we have and how much of the debt we have paid.

I want to say to all the people in the province of Ontario that, since we got elected in 2003 and up to now, we have paid more than \$5.7 billion of the debt. When the Conservative government was in power, they added to that debt almost \$1 billion, from \$19 billion to \$20 billion. As a matter of fact, they never invested a penny in generation or invested money in hydro to make sure all the electricity, all the lights stay on across the province of Ontario.

I'm delighted to get this opportunity to stand up in my place and speak about our energy plan, about our vision and about the strategy for the people of Ontario to make sure that every household has lights and that the lights stay on, and won't lose them for different reasons—because we don't have enough power to support the lighting system across the province Ontario.

At 2 o'clock today, our Minister of Energy outlined the vision of the government and the strategy of this government to make sure we have enough hydro to support all our facilities, our homes, our companies and our factories for many years to come. It's the only way to support the industry and attract more companies to come and open in Ontario. Without that vision, we don't have enough hydro or energy to attract companies to come to Ontario, exactly what happened in 2003 when we had a blackout across the province.

Interjection: Rolling blackouts.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Yes, for many days and many weeks, because companies were afraid. They wanted to come to Ontario: "Do we or don't we have enough hydro to support our factory?" In the meantime, the price wasn't correct; they had an artificial price.

At the present time, the people of Ontario have a choice. People are paying for the price, paying for the debt and paying taxes—you have a choice: Either you pay it in the real price here or you pay it another way, in the debt. So which is the best: to be honest and upfront with the people of Ontario or hide the debt and not talk about it?

We have a plan. By the years 2015 to 2018, hopefully the debt will be paid by all of Ontario.

Mr. Peter Kormos: You're not going to be here in 2015.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Whether I'm here or not, the people of Ontario will benefit from this achievement, from this plan.

Also, in support of this plan, we're paying a 10% rebate to Ontarians for the next five years to support them in going through that difficult time. We understand that the people of Ontario are going through a difficult time. We understand our duty and obligation to support the vulnerable people among us and our duty and obligation to support the companies, factories and industry to

be able to operate in Ontario on a daily basis and be able to open the door on a regular basis without being afraid of losing their hydro.

I know the opposition has no plan for hydro. They have no plan, no vision, for the future, whether Conservative or NDP, because you know what? I know they don't like wind, they don't like solar, they don't like hydro and they don't like nuclear. I'm not sure what they like. I don't understand so far.

I had the privilege to be in question period, and I heard a lot of the questions: "If you don't like nuclear, what do you like then? Do you like solar?" You don't like it either. "If you don't like solar, do you like wind?" You don't like it either. "Do you like renewable?" You don't like it either. You talk about, "This is expensive" and "This is not good for Ontario." In the meantime, they want hydro to be on all the time, so how can we provide hydro without investing in generation, whether nuclear or solar or wind or renewable?

The choice is to appeal to the people of Ontario. Either you are on the side of the people who can invest in your future or you are on the side of the people who do not care about anything, who are trying to hide all the prices and go into debt and tell people, "Yes, we'll give you a low price." But, look, you're going to pay the debt retirement forever because it's going to accumulate: more debt on top of the debt we have in the province of Ontario.

I'd be delighted to continue on but I want to leave room for many of my colleagues to speak about this important issue, because it's a concern to every part of the province. We want to talk to the people over and over, to tell them that we, the government of Ontario, under the leadership of Dalton McGuinty, are on your side to invest in your future, to continue to invest in clean energy—clear and clean energy, not dirty coal energy, because we care about your health and your future.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's my pleasure to join the debate on our opposition day motion today, presented by my colleague from Parry Sound–Muskoka, Mr. Miller:

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario calls for the current balance and amount paid to date of the residual stranded debt be displayed in the annual report of the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp. and on hydro bills so Ontario families will know how much longer they will pay the debt retirement charge. Addressed to the Minister of Finance."

When you've talked to people over this last couple of years but certainly even more pointedly over the last few months, if you talked to anybody about what's on their mind, about what is bugging them about the McGuinty government, hydro and electricity prices will be near the top or at the top of the list.

With respect to my colleague from London–Fanshawe, who waxed on about other people hiding the price, goodness gracious, it was the previous government that opened up the electricity bills so that people could

see what they were actually paying for and in what percentage of their bill. This government has done everything that they have been possibly able to do to obfuscate the actual facts around electricity. We had a Minister of Energy, George Smitherman—do you remember him? He promised that the Green Energy Act was going to add 1% per year to your electricity bills. That was the promise by George Smitherman, and obviously backed by Dalton McGuinty, the Premier. We find that to be just total silliness. It's nonsense. Now we have a government that is in full panic mode because of the mess they've made of this file.

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But when you talk to that electricity customer, one of the things about that hydro bill that bugs them the most is the debt retirement charge. They look at that bill and it's 0.7 cents per kilowatt hour, and they say, "Every month I'm paying this debt retirement charge. At least when I go to the bank and I've got a mortgage on my home or I'm doing a car payment or some other loan repayment, I can find out how much I still owe. I can find out how much longer I'm going to be paying at the current rate." But with this government, there's no disclosure.

The amount of this residual stranded debt in 2002 was—get this—\$7.8 billion. The amount that this government has collected since taking office, or that has been collected since 2002, part of it under the previous government, totals up to—now, listen to this again—\$7.8 billion, notwithstanding that there would be some interest involved here, but not \$7.8 billion. As near as we can get from the government, they are still going to be collecting this until at least 2015. That's another five years.

We've been at historic low interest rates in the past several years. There's no way on God's green earth that you can justify that kind of a payment schedule to the people of the province of Ontario who are getting whacked on their hydro bill every time they turn around. It's not just the debt retirement charge. It's the HST; it's the price they're paying for power. The total—I have to be careful with my words, Madam Speaker. The irony about this place is you can't accuse someone in this place of not telling the truth, and yet you can't compel someone to actually tell the truth. It is a kind of strange dichotomy, but that's the way it is. So they can say whatever they want on the other side and we really can't challenge them in the direct way we'd like to sometimes. Isn't that fascinating, Madam Speaker?

They've been saying all kinds of things about electricity and electricity rates and the future and what is going to happen, and all kinds of promises about the Green Energy Act and what it's going to mean to the consumer. But they've been caught. They've been caught. The reality is that they were hoping to get by these next few months and maybe just slip by the election, but the jig is up. Everybody knows now that they have not been forthcoming about what the cost of their so-called electricity plan is going to mean to the people of the province of Ontario.

They don't want to do any more disclosure as to what the actual balance of this residual stranded debt

retirement charge is, what the balance of that actual debt is. So we've tabled a motion in the House today, a very reasonable motion that I think could be supported by members of the government benches. All we're asking for is for this government, which I know has gone into its cocoon and its shell and is trying to just ride it out and avoid any possible disclosure of anything that might come back to bite them, as they say—they're just trying to ride it out and keep the wagons circled. We're asking them to disclose to Ontario consumers, who are getting whacked over the head with a sledgehammer by this government every time they turn around, where is the money? As Jerry Maguire would say, "Show me the money." Where's the money that you have been collecting for this debt retirement charge? The people in this province—it is their money. They have a right to know. It's about time.

The Minister of Energy had his press conference today. He's not talking about green energy anymore; he's talking about clean energy. They want to turn the dial, change the message a little bit. He's talking about his "clean" energy plan. Well, it's about time that this government came clean with the people of Ontario. For once and for all, let them know what they actually owe in this debt retirement charge.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate.

Mr. Peter Kormos: I'm pleased to join in this unfortunately all-too-brief debate on this opposition day motion. New Democrats are supporting this motion. It's eminently reasonable, and I'd very much like to hear from a Liberal or two to explain why they wouldn't vote for it as well—just a couple.

This is a sad day when the government backbenchers fight so hard to avoid transparency, and I suspect at the same time to avoid being caught in the act. This government, with its chronic mendacity, again persists in concealing the real numbers—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I'd ask you to withdraw.

Mr. Peter Kormos: I withdraw. They persist in concealing the real numbers—and flim-flams the hard-working—if only they were working—people of Ontario.

Why, just the other day, Thursday of last week, we had an economic statement and all the fanfare. You could hear the trumpets blaring and you could hear the triumphant march playing on somebody's CD player. The Minister of Finance strutted in here, Napoleonic. He took to his feet and gave his dramatic, albeit brief, discourse on what is the fall economic statement. I got the old highlighter out—you know, the yellow highlighter—and I recall him spouting that there would be 10% off your electricity bill every month, effective January 1, 2011. The backbenchers applauded. They had their cheerleading little dresses on and the pompoms. They were doing somersaults and balancing big red balls on their noses and the flippers were flapping. But, you see, the rest of the story had yet to be told, because if you go to the so-called background papers—this is the government's own

document, so you can bet your boots that if their numbers are skewed, they're skewed in favour of the government.

I shouldn't have used the word "mendacity"; I apologize. But I'll tell you, if Diogenes was in this room right now, he'd be spending an awful long time and walk out frustrated and discouraged. I can tell you that much.

So here we are. We've got page 11 of the papers telling us that over the next 20 years, electricity rates are expected to increase by about 3.5% a year. Ah, but turn the page, Speaker, turn the page: Over the next five years, residential electricity prices are expected to rise by 46%. Wow.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: As the member points out, that was last week, that number—this is like the waistline of most MPPs: It tends to grow over the course of the weeks and months from the point of their election here. So from the point of the announcement last week, 46%—you can bet your bottom dollar it's going to be higher by the time you get into the first full year.

What kind of crummy deal is that? What kind of cheap shot from a cheap-shot government is that? It's desperate stuff. These guys are barely treading water. I wish the government House leader was here because I'd ask about that Johnny Cash song, "How high's the water, Mama?"

Mr. Randy Hillier: How high's the water, Mama?

Mr. Peter Kormos: It's six feet high and rising.

See, you've got a crew over here, and the bilge pumps don't work any more. The bilge pumps don't work, and more and more gaps or seams along the hull of the ship are letting in more and more water. They're going under. We know that. Again, people are grabbing life preservers and grabbing the few lifeboats that are left and bowing out.

1650

Some of the reportage of that is, quite frankly, very amusing. You read the Toronto Star article, "Another McGuinty Liberal Bows Out." I read this verbatim: "Another insider said the next to depart will likely be MPP Wayne Arthurs (Pickering-Scarborough East), who has confided to friends that he will not seek re-election."

I've got tell you, sir, those aren't very good friends, because they ratted you out. Think about it: He told his friends that he's not going to seek re-election. Your friends ratted you out. I suspect it was some of your colleagues in caucus, because that would be typical.

People suggest that somehow I'm cynical about these things, that somehow I'm jaded. Look, I came here a little while ago. I came here when I was skinny. I came here when I was young, when I was good-looking—quite frankly, I really was—when I had colour in my hair, when I had a spring in my step.

I got here long enough ago to watch an arrogant Liberal government, led by one Mr. Peterson, that had a huge majority. He had a bigger rump than you guys have got. It was a big-rumped government. And they went down the tubes. It was like that swirl; you could hear the flushing sound a mile away.

Then I watched, in 1995, another liberal government, Bob Rae's; the tsunami washed it away.

Then I watched Tories get elected in a huge sweep. And again, like some of you who were here, I watched them. By 2003 they had become out of touch. They had become arrogant. They had become aloof. They had taken to desperate measures, like telling people they were going to get a 10% cut in their electricity prices and not telling them that those prices were going to go up 46%.

I understand why the folks across the way are a little apprehensive. I understand why they don't particularly enjoy me saying these things. I don't say it to be cruel; I'm not a cruel person. I'm a kind person; I'm a caring person. I cry too. I feel for the despair of others. But I've got to tell you, as I've told you before, you can walk past the government caucus room now and you can smell the fear.

Look, here I go to my speaking notes. When 76% of Ontarians say they'd like to see another party in power, this party is in deep, deep trouble. When 86% of Ontarians say it's harder now to make ends meet than it was two years ago, this government's in deep, deep trouble.

When Ipsos Reid—I love the trend lines on that Ipsos Reid poll—puts the Conservatives at 41%, the Liberals at 32% and the NDP at 20%, I tell you, this government's in deep, deep trouble. That economic statement last week didn't give them the bump. They were told that in caucus, I suspect. Mind you, none of the backbenchers had any—by the way, if I do say anything unparliamentary, I withdraw in advance, Speaker. I want to make that clear. I withdraw, I withdraw, I withdraw. That's like three free ones, okay? So I get three withdrawals proactively, in anticipation. I just made a bank deposit on the credit side, okay? And if I say anything inappropriate, I apologize.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Take it one sentence at a time.

Mr. Peter Kormos: I'm doing my best.

When you take a look at this kind of polling, the problem is that there doesn't appear to have been any bump from last week's economic statement. It wasn't the lifeline that some of the—see, I understand spin. I may have done it a couple of times in my life myself. But the worst thing is when people spin themselves, and that tends to be what happens in government caucus rooms.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: They start believing their spin.

Mr. Peter Kormos: That tends to be what happens in government caucus rooms three and a half years into, as it is, a second term, when things have just gone flat, things have gone bad, things have gone south, things have gone sour, the milk has curdled, the orange juice is bitter.

Have you ever done that? Have you ever—

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Well, you don't, because you're probably far more fastidious about your fridge than I am. Sometimes I think my fridge is like a square plastic and metal composter. But have you ever done that? You go to the fridge and you grab the little container of milk and you take a big gulp, and you realize—you look at the date and it expired three weeks ago. It's an awful feeling. But that's the sort of taste that it's in the mouths of the

shipmates on a ship that's in the tsunami and on the ship that's sinking.

I do want to mention something. I read a delightful thing today. Can I share this with you, Speaker? Can I change the tone here for just a minute? Because I realize I'm starting to get maybe a little bitter. I was just reading a review of a book that's going to be released in March 2011, *And the Show Went On: Cultural Life in Nazi-Occupied Paris*, by author Alan Riding, whom I don't know. It's a fascinating review, so delightful, and it's just heartwarming.

“Edith Piaf”—*La Vie en Rose*; *Non, Je Ne Regrette Rien*—“who said in 1940 that ‘my real job is to sing, to sing no matter what happens,’ was willing to perform twice in Stalag III-D, a camp for French prisoners-of-war outside Berlin—but on her first visit cleverly encouraged the camp commander to allow photographs to be taken of her with him and the POWs. The photos were then cropped so that each POW's image could be attached to counterfeit documents identifying him as a French worker in Germany. On Piaf's next visit to the camp, the documents were secretly delivered. If a POW escaped, he had a protective German ID card.”

That was just a remarkable act by—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I'd ask the member to return to the opposition day motion.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Of course I will return to the opposition day motion, but that was so touching. I just read that half an hour ago, and I thought it was a remarkable thing, because here is a woman who was accused by some historians of being not quite a collaborator, but a passive collaborator with the Germans. I just thought that was—

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: No, that was her heir, Josephine Baker, who did that.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Oh, yes, you're right.

Mr. Peter Kormos: But, look, I was getting rather harsh. I was getting perhaps a little angry in how I was addressing government members, and I thought that would be a good distraction and I thought people would be interested in knowing. So I'm going to get the book when it's out, *And the Show Went On: Cultural Life in Nazi-Occupied Paris*, Alan Riding. There's a whole lot of other stuff in the review that talks about other, similar things, because it's about the cultural life.

But life for the Liberals has taken a turn for the worse. You know that, don't you, Speaker? And instead of their stupid, crummy announcements, that non-economic statement, that embarrassing economic statement of last week, and what I'm told was a whole lot of recycled stuff, including big, expensive nukes, today, you'd think that the Liberals would jump at the chance.

I'm actually amazed that the Conservatives put this motion on the order paper, I truly am, because they've given the Liberals an opportunity to redeem themselves. Do you understand what I'm saying? They've thrown the Liberals a lifeline. If Liberals supported this motion, because it would be Liberal backbenchers, the public, the

people in the ridings of members who supported it, would say, "If my member is a Liberal, and I know the polls say what they say, and maybe I was polled myself and contributed to that poll result that says that 76% of respondents, Ontarians, say they would like to see another party in power"—now, you know that if next week a poll comes out and says that only 75% of respondents say they would like to see another party in power, these guys are going to claim victory. But if a poll comes out and says that 78% of respondents say they would like to see another party in power, these guys are going to claim that it was a rotten pollster.

Mind you, back to the Ipsos Reid poll, I understand that this is the same pollster that put George Smitherman neck and neck with Rob Ford, so I don't know. I'm waiting for a subsequent poll to verify or validate that one. What's interesting about the Ipsos Reid is the trend lines and the GTA and eastern Ontario. Wow. That means that you're not just talking Cornwall and my good friend Senator Runciman's Leeds-Grenville riding. When you get poll numbers like that, you're talking about getting up into Ottawa and places like that—I suppose the neighbours of the member for Nepean-Carleton.

1700

What's a government backbencher to do? Prepare a resumé? Perhaps. It's too late to cross the floor. Nobody will have them at this point; they're damaged goods. They're bruised and battered and they've not demonstrated the sort of courage of conviction that people ought to have if they're going to serve here in this Legislative Assembly and serve the people of Ontario. Because folks down where I come from are hurting, and one of the things that's squeezing them most—the opposition House leader borrowed a line from my NDP colleague from Trinity-Spadina; he said that these people are getting whacked. You've heard Marchese say that, haven't you? And people are; people are getting hammered. Then this Liberal government comes to them and says, "Suck it up, because if you think this is bad"—this is what Mr. McGuinty, in effect, tells the people of Ontario. He says, "If you think this is bad, it's only going to get worse." Then he has the audacity to say, "If you think this is bad, it's only going to get worse, but vote for me and my people." What? Is somebody nuts? Why would you vote for somebody who is going to make things worse for you? Why would you vote for somebody who is actually going to promise that your electricity rates are going to go up 46% minimum—mark my words: minimum, minimum, minimum—and you're going to pay HST on every penny of that 46% increase.

And, ah, the leader of the NDP, Ms. Horwath, let the cat out of the bag yesterday, didn't she? Because she asked the government during question period, "How is it that in your legislation that you say is going to reduce electricity rates by 10%, even though they're going to go up by 46%"—it's going to reduce them by 10%, even though they'll go up by 46%. How is it that in that same legislation the government has the power to unilaterally,

without ever coming to this chamber, kill the program, to terminate it? It's only a five-year program. Understand that: It's not a permanent program; it's only five years. The government's legislation, the legislation it introduced last Thursday, gives it the power to unilaterally, through regulation, in the darkness and secrecy of the locked-door cabinet room, kill that five-year program at any point in time or to reduce the 10% to 9% or 8% or 7% or 6% or 5% or 4% or 3% or 1% or 0.5%.

This gang of Liberals has taken the people of this province for suckers. Good grief. Have they no shame, or are they just so out of touch? Do they not go to their farmers' markets on Saturday mornings? Do they not go to the church basements on Sunday afternoons for the dinners?

I was at St. Michael the Archangel Ukrainian Catholic Church down on Harriet Street in Welland last Sunday night for their annual parish feast. Father John Sloan, who has just turned 80, by the way—a wonderful man. That's my home parish. That's where I was, as a kid, baptized, christened. It's an aging parish. It's a Ukrainian-Slovak parish. I talk to folks there. These are hard-working people; these are proud people; strong people. But they're in their 60s and 70s and, like Father Sloan, 80s, and others—one of the priests there is 94 years old. These people, yes, are part of the 86% of Ontarians who say it is harder now to make ends meet than it was two years ago. They're not slothful, they're not careless with their money.

What's this government doing, telling people to get up at 4 in morning to do their laundry, or to take their bath with the electric hot water tank, or to roast a side of beef? Or telling the kids to stay up until 1 in the morning to do their homework so that they don't get whacked by Mr. McGuinty's not-so-smart—quite frankly, very stupid—meters, which don't save any electricity and which have jacked up electricity prices for consumers across this province, including the folks who were down there at St. Michael the Archangel Ukrainian Catholic Church for their parish feast last Sunday night.

Malcolm Allen, the federal member of Parliament, was there with Peggy, his wife, and a whole lot of people; some of them I've known for my whole life, of course. A whole lot of the eastern rite clergy were there. Maria Papp from the Hungarian Presbyterian Church was there and a whole lot of parishioners—good folks, just plain folks, hard-working folks; as I say, folks who aren't careless with money; folks who learned a long time ago to turn the light off when you leave a room; folks who learned a long time ago to turn the furnace down a few more degrees at night because you're in bed with blankets covering you; folks who also know full well that if you have babies crawling around on the floor, little babies crawling still before they're walking, you can't afford to turn the heat down to 62 degrees or 65 degrees because it's cold on the floor. Hot air rises, and the floor is cold. With little babies crawling on the floor, you can't turn the heat down to 62 degrees. What's Mr. McGuinty thinking? If you're 90 years old, things start to get a little

chillier, too. You can't turn the heat down to 62 degrees when you're 90 years old because you just feel the cold a little more than you did when you were younger. So what the heck is Mr. McGuinty thinking when he tells people who are 90 years old, "Turn the heat down," or, quite frankly, "Turn it down during the day, because that's when we're really going to hammer you. We're going to mug you. We're going to roll you. We're going to grab you by the ankles, shake every last nickel and dime out of you."

What is he thinking? Because he's sure as heck not thinking of the folks of Ontario. He sure as heck ain't thinking about the folks who were down there at that parish feast at St. Michael the Archangel Ukrainian Catholic Church on Harriet Street in Welland; or, for that matter, the people who were at the Canadian Corps on Saturday afternoon in Thorold, where the ladies' auxiliary celebrated its 75th anniversary. That's a more mature crowd as well, with a view few veterans left in it, too.

Heck, I'm going to bring a speech with me next week and sneak it on to the record somehow. There was a wonderful guest speaker, a retired sergeant, who was born in 1923 and, in 1941, joined up. He was 18. He was part of the liberation of Holland. When that was done, he volunteered for the Pacific. He hadn't had enough yet. When I see somebody like him—a veteran who's fought hard, worked hard, saved hard, lived honestly, done all the right things—when I see a fellow like him in his senior years as a retiree living on a pension that's eroding, seeing savings evaporate, and I see him being squeezed by this government, I've got to tell you, it leaves me with far more than distaste. It leaves me with outright disgust.

So, people, the good news is that 11 months from now, you can vote these people all the way to oblivion. That's the good news.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to speak on this motion as well.

I'm sitting here reading Ontario's long-term energy plan, listening to the debate, and I find it very astonishing. I can't believe that this motion is actually brought forward by the official opposition, given that they are the ones who are responsible for this debt retirement charge. They are the ones who are responsible for the stranded debt that Ontarians—you and I—who consume electricity, who get a bill, are paying for. So I find it very interesting that they have the gall to actually bring this particular motion forward, knowing full well that they are the ones responsible, that they are the ones who neglected our energy system in the past. They're the ones who did not charge the true cost of electricity, which is what we need to pay, resulting in this massive debt, which we now have to pay over time.

1710

What are we talking about? I think the member from Kitchener-Conestoga, when she was speaking earlier,

talked about those numbers and their worth, reminding us that we were left with over \$20 billion—\$20.5 billion, to be exact—in terms of stranded debt. This is money that was left on the whole hydro infrastructure—not to mention artificial caps on electricity prices, which resulted in about \$1 billion in extra debt for consumers. It's our debt; it's nobody else's debt. We're the ones who pay this particular debt.

What we've been doing, through the debt retirement charge, which we all see on our bills—and, yes, it is the number one complaint we hear. When my constituents in Ottawa Centre come and talk to me in my constituency office, they want to know what this debt retirement charge is. They want to understand where this is coming from and why they are paying. And when you explain it to them, they say, "Oh, yeah." They remember the mismanagement by the past government that took place. They remember the exercise to privatize the electricity system in this province, and that botched effort. Then they tried to deregulate the electricity system, and that kind of backfired. Then they tried to put a price cap so that they could mollify people. They remember that very clearly.

Just last Saturday, I hosted a hydro information session in my riding of Ottawa Centre, simply because I wanted to make sure, as people are concerned—and rightly so—that they'll be able to understand why electricity prices, hydro prices, are going up. We organized this hydro information session in my riding, in Westboro. We invited Hydro Ottawa to talk about the bills, smart meters, time-of-use pricing, what a debt retirement charge is, and how the whole electricity system works, because I think we'll all admit it is quite complicated.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Too complicated for you guys.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Well, you may be smarter than me, sir, but it is complicated. I think it is our responsibility to ensure that every citizen understands how the system works. I think sometimes we think that electricity generation is as simple as just flicking a switch on and off. We know it's more complicated than that.

Also, we had representation from EnviroCentre, a not-for-profit conservation group in my riding, to talk about how consumers can reduce their consumption and conserve more.

Anyway, what was interesting in that session was that most of the people who came were seniors—it was great that there was an opportunity to speak with them—and they were not angry. I will be honest with you: I was ready for some anger. They were not angry, but they had questions. Anxiety? No doubt. They were actually very happy at the end of the day that there was an elected representative who was able to be present to answer their questions. We worked collaboratively together to ensure that they understand where we were, what kind of neglect took place within our system, where we are going, what kind of investments we are making today and what our future is when it comes to having a stable, reliable and clean energy system—very important. I have to tell you that they want a clean energy system.

Talking to seniors is very instructive, because they will tell you they do want to leave a cleaner environment for their grandchildren—no ifs, ands or buts about it. One thing we know about our parents and our grandparents: They are not selfish. I think we'll all agree to that. They want their government to make those kinds of investments.

The stranded debt: That is one question that keeps coming up again and again—\$20 billion left by the previous government; \$5.8 billion, almost \$6 billion, paid since 2003; roughly about \$14 billion remaining, which should be paid by 2015. Since 2006, this government has been paying—not this government, actually; it's the ratepayers. Those who pay for electricity have been paying \$1 billion a year toward this stranded debt, that was left by the previous government.

Here's another legacy issue which I think people understand: When you are not investing in your electricity infrastructure, you're neglecting it. And when you're neglecting it, essentially what you're doing is that the system is becoming poor, it will crumble and it's inefficient. People understand that. It's like having your car. If you don't maintain your car, after a while it's going to fall apart. The same thing with your house: If you're not going to make sure that you do the regular upkeep on your house—don't change the shingles on the roof, don't look after the foundation—it is going to crumble.

The electricity system is no different. In fact, if anything, it's more complicated. What the previous governments did by not charging the true price of electricity—they had no money to invest back in upgrading the infrastructure. We have a system which became highly inefficient. We lost electricity in transmission, so that was an absolute waste. We had a system which relied on coal, because it is the cheapest way of producing energy, but it is also the dirtiest way of producing energy, and that results in bad air, asthma in our children and other respiratory diseases. That's what happens when you don't have money. That is what our government, the McGuinty government, has been focused on since 2003: to ensure that we reinvest in our aging hydroelectricity system, whatever you want to call it, to rebuild the system, to make sure the system is able to grow, to put more generation.

What's most important, something I hear again and again in my riding of Ottawa Centre, is that people do not want electricity out of coal. That's one thing they do not want. They want coal to be phased out. I find it very astonishing, I get extremely surprised when I hear the official opposition saying that coal is the way to do it. There's something called clean coal; I think they've used that term in the past. There is no such thing as clean coal. Putting scrubbers on stacks is not going to make coal and the emissions somehow clean or pure. It is dirty. Yes, it's cheaper to make electricity, but it is dirty, and the long-term costs on our health infrastructure and on our personal health are extremely high. What we need do is get rid of that. We need to invest in renewable sources of energy. We need to invest in wind, solar, biogas and biomass, those types of technologies.

I can only speak for my riding. When I go door to door in my riding of Ottawa Centre, that is one thing I'm asked again and again: What kind of investment is the McGuinty government making in renewable sources of energy? Because that's what they want to see. I think they understand and know that that is more expensive. That is why we will continue to invest.

I was just reading Ontario's long-term energy plan, which the Minister of Energy just announced today, looking at the next 20-year horizon. That is the kind of very forward-looking plan he is presenting to ensure that not only do we have capacity in our system in the long run—and I hope we have the type of capacity where we can export energy and sell it to other jurisdictions, because there will be more demand for cleaner sources of energy; and we can sell that electricity at a premium price down south to our American cousins—but also enough stable, reliable and clean supply to ensure that our economy continues to grow.

That's our effort. We're not only cleaning up the mess which was left by the previous government, we are also building for the future. That's something I think we should be proud of, and I am extremely supportive of that.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Dufferin-Caledon.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm pleased to speak to this resolution. It was interesting, as always, to hear the history lesson from the previous speaker. Of course, what intrigued me the most was that he was willing to admit that the number one complaint he receives as an MPP in his constituency office is, of course, regarding hydro issues and hydro bills. It sort of reinforces the value of what we're bringing forward and debating this afternoon with this resolution.

I'm doing double duty here today because the social policy committee of which I am a member is talking about Bill 122, An Act to increase the financial accountability of organizations in the broader public sector. In some ways, it's very appropriate that we have some crossover. In one committee we're talking about the value of expanding public accountability and transparency and actually opening up those books and value for the constituents and the people of Ontario, and yet what I'm hearing from the Liberal members is, "We don't want to do anything more with hydro bills. There is no reason why hydro consumers should need to know what the debt retirement charge is."

1720

I can tell you, the phone calls I receive, the visits I get and the emails talk about, "I understand that there is a debt retirement charge, and I want to know how much is left." It's a very simple request. I've spent a lot of my time dealing with Hydro One and all of the various hydro agencies trying to get a hard number on what that is. Quite honestly, they don't want to provide it. They, for whatever reason, either under the direction of the minister or for their own protection, are not prepared to release that number. I find it very frustrating as an MPP

who is trying to serve her constituents, to get those numbers for them, because it's often requested of me.

There are some emails that I actually wanted to reference in relation to this debate. This is just a quick one from my riding. I'll read an excerpt:

"The electricity supply system for this province is too important to have been in the hands of McGuinty, Duncan, Smitherman and their cronies.

"Their policy to satisfy the electrical energy demands of the province amounts to little more than increasing the rates drastically, plus HST, and spending PR money to convince the population that it is a green 'culture change' that is good for us, helping the environment, for instance.

"What they have done to reduce our standard and quality of living"—lots in this case.

"Did you know Canadians use more electricity per head than Europeans?" Well, of course. Look at the "winter and summer degree day deviations." And on it goes.

There's another one which I found quite amusing. They talked about the frustration of dealing with the Ontario Power Authority and Hydro One—who has the number and who's willing to release the number. The last comment is talking about the value of conservation, that in the minister's response, "He seems to recommend you modify your lifestyle to become a night person," which, of course, is what we have been talking about regularly. Tim Hudak and the Progressive Conservative Party have raised the issue regularly about the time-of-use meters and how they are going to impact people in our society who do not have the option of changing their lifestyle to begin at 9 p.m. or 10 p.m. at night. Seniors come to mind and, of course, as the Comsoc critic, I must always raise individuals who have a disability and perhaps are working out of their home, or living out of their home, more often.

This is one that actually just came this morning: "It would be really nice if you synchronized some of your programs. On one side you are encouraging everyone to become energy-wise, which is a good thing. On the other hand, the way you bill for hydro does not reward those that do make the effort. Specifically, charging high 'delivery' fees means that we are not paying for how much we use but rather just because we have a wire coming to our residences." And then he goes on to describe how, in one of his hydro connections—and this happens many times in this agricultural community. You are paying far more for the delivery charge than you ever are for the hydro cost. It doesn't matter how much you are able to conserve. You are still getting dinged very dramatically with the delivery charges and, of course, the HST, and on and on we go.

I see I've been told that I have to wrap up because we have a number of speakers who would like to raise this.

To me, this is about transparency. If we want to have more transparency in our government agencies, in our hospitals, then why can't we have it in our hydro bills?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm very pleased to be able to speak on this motion for a little while concerning stranded debt and debt retirement charges.

Like my colleague from Ottawa Centre, I was actually quite surprised to see that this was the subject of a motion being brought forward by the Conservatives because, to me, this whole issue of stranded debt and debt retirement charges is actually symbolic of why the Conservative energy policy was a failure. But if they want to talk about it, hey, we can go with the program.

Now, what we need to understand when we talk about energy policy by the Conservatives and the NDP is that there was this great myth. The great myth was that you could have cheap hydro, you could have cheap electricity. The only problem was, it wasn't actually true. As a result of that, the debt of Ontario Hydro, the old utility which did everything in Ontario, went up to \$20 billion. It went up to \$20 billion. It kept growing and growing because we, as consumers, were paying this price that didn't actually reflect the cost of doing business. As a side effect, nobody actually ever fixed the generators or fixed the transmission lines, but that's another issue.

So here we were with this huge big debt. The Tories knew that it wasn't working very well, and they thought, "Well, gee, we'll just fix all this by selling it to private companies." They started to talk to the private companies. Do you know what they discovered? Nobody wanted to buy a company that had \$20 billion worth of debt. So they thought, "Well, gee, we're going to have to find somewhere to park this debt." So they set up a corporation, whose name I can never remember, the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp., because the only purpose of this corporation is to have \$19 billion—let's be fair. It was \$19.4 billion I think at the time they set up the corporation.

Nobody wanted to buy Ontario Hydro with \$19.4 billion worth of debt, so they set up this sort of funny corporation to have the debt and all the other liabilities from Ontario Hydro. They said, "We have a wonderful scheme. We're going to put this on consumers' bills. The consumers didn't have to pay for it in the past, but the consumers in the future will pay for all this artificially cheap electricity that they consume. The new consumers can pay for that." That's how this debt retirement charge got on the bills.

Now, you would have thought that, having set that up, the Tories would—because they set this up in 1999, when they were still there—actually have used the money that was coming in to consumers to start paying down the debt. But no, they didn't do that. It went up by another \$1 billion, so that by the time the Tories left government in 2003, it was up \$1 billion and we had \$20.5 billion worth of debt for future Ontarians who buy electricity to pay down for electricity that was consumed in the past.

Now, one of the things that was really interesting about this was the way they really sort of boondoggled consumers. They parked the debt. They thought about trying to sell these off, and now they're asking us, "So

what's the real situation?" Well, let me tell you the real situation.

Let me tell you what we have done. We have paid off \$1,000,070,000 in 2006; \$1,000,004,000 in 2007; \$1,000,064,000 in 2008; \$1,000,043,000 in 2009; \$1,000,372,000 this year and projected another billion dollars that we're going to get rid of next year.

But the other thing that's really, really interesting is, you know that \$1 billion that it went up? It's really interesting to know where that \$1 billion came from, because the Conservatives had another hare-brained scheme, which was that they were going to totally deregulate electricity. Of course, by then, all we had were coal-fired generators, because they had let everything go to rack and ruin. We were buying it from the States. When they deregulated the price of electricity, it shot up a matter of 30% in a few months, and consumers were really angry. You should have heard them. I was going door to door at the time. They were really angry. So the Tories panicked. They artificially capped electricity at 4.3 cents, and it cost \$1 billion extra to buy the hydro we were consuming. That's why the debt went up, and we're still paying for that cap that was total fiction.

This is nonsense. I'm not buying a Tory energy policy.
1730

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Nepean–Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's great to do this.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Give 'em hell, Lisa.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My colleague from Welland says, "Give 'em heck"—

Mr. Peter Kormos: I said, "Give 'em hell."

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: You used a non-family-friendly term. It's okay.

The previous Speaker from the Ontario Liberal Party was talking about hare-brained schemes, and I can tell you something: Hare-brained schemes are what are ruling the day by this Liberal government.

Today my colleague from Parry Sound–Muskoka, Norm Miller, has put forward a very sound motion, a reasonable motion, one that calls for transparency and accountability and making sure that the debt retirement charge is transparent to Ontario families—and how we're paying down this residual stranded debt.

Presently in Ontario—and this is why he has brought this forward—it is unclear what the residual debt is, even though to date, Ontario taxpayers have paid \$7.8 billion toward the residual debt that's been collected—or we believe it's been put toward the residual debt.

Let me put this into perspective. My colleague opposite even acknowledged this: \$1 billion per year has been paid toward this debt, or we think, since 2002. This McGuinty Liberal government has consistently pushed back the date to pay this debt off. First they said it would be 2014, and now it is 2015. This is not a surprise to us. This is the Liberal government that told us they would close coal-fired generated plants by, I believe it was 2007. Then it was 2011. Then it was 2014. They don't

get it done. They make promises that they can't keep or don't intend to keep. That's why my colleague from Parry Sound–Muskoka and the entire Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus are standing here today asking for transparency in that \$1 billion per year that Ontario taxpayers and Ontario families have been paying toward the stranded debt.

Almost every electricity user in the province of Ontario is paying the debt retirement charge on their electricity consumption, and there is no transparency. Ontario families are left to continually pay the bill without any knowledge whatsoever on where that money is going, and if there's any relief in sight. They have no idea.

Let me put this into perspective as well. This equates to about \$7 per bill per family, plus the HST on hydro bills. In addition to that, they're actually paying for their electricity plus the HST again. Ontario families have had enough.

In fact, in my hand I have correspondence from the people that I represent in Nepean–Carleton, who have had it up to here with this Liberal government and their expensive energy schemes, and their inability to pay down the stranded debt while they continue to hide it from us.

Let me read this: "I just opened my monthly hydro bill. They have increased my billing plan amount by 50%. These increases are outrageous considering that about half the bills have nothing to do with the amount of electricity you use, but it is debt reduction—and there are millions sitting in that fund—delivery charge and HST."

Another: "I am completely outraged at what McGuinty is doing with hydro and how he is effectively treating us like fools. I fear he will announce removal of the debt reduction charge, thinking it's the pacifier for the people, while failing to handle this properly."

Another one: "I'm writing this email because I am concerned about the rise in hydro rates and the current Liberal government planning further rate hikes. It's their responsibility to lessen the load on the middle class."

A further email comes from my riding: "To spend money on expensive hydro production by green methods and wind power is wrong, especially when we in Ontario could buy power cheaply from the province of Quebec."

This comes from my riding as well: "I write to you today to express my dismay at the course of action the government has chosen to take in regards to energy costs. Furthermore, the headlines in today's Citizen trumpet the fact that Ontario is now going to borrow another billion dollars to subsidize or reduce hydro rates for Ontario taxpayers. Isn't this just having the taxpayer pay from the left pocket rather than the right?"

This is the problem. There is little transparency surrounding the debt retirement charge and how it is paying the residual stranded debt. It's unclear what the residual stranded debt is today. We know that \$7.8 billion has been collected from my constituents and from constituents right across Ontario to pay this down, yet this crowd opposite, this Liberal government, continues to mismanage tax dollars, and we don't know what that

stranded debt is today. That's why my colleague from Parry Sound–Muskoka had the foresight to bring this forward, so that we in Ontario and the constituents we represent would have an idea of what they are paying, how long they'll be paying it for, and when they will finally be free from the burdens of this Liberal government.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Bill Mauro: I'm pleased to have six minutes left on the clock today to speak on this opposition day motion. Like many of our members on this side of the House, I guess I'm wondering a little bit why the official opposition, the Conservatives, would use their last opposition day motion of the session to speak on this file, given the history that they have as a party with mis-managing it in such a gross way, which they did from 1995 to 2003. It's a little bit, I would say, like leading with your chin.

Speaker, I want to read into the record a few things for you. But first, we've heard mentioned a few times from the opposite benches about the issue of transparency. I'm going to read this for you: "The projections in its 2009 annual report indicate that the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp."—the corporation set up by the Conservatives when they were the government of the day—"will be in a position to offset its liabilities in the years ranging from 2015 to 2018, at which time the debt retirement charge will end." It appears that there is reporting going on in this regard already. The numbers are in the annual report from the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp., set up by you when you were in government.

But there are a few specific points that I want to read into the record when it comes to the debt retirement charge, and to make sure the people in my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan are aware of this. The charge was slapped on everybody's energy bill in 1999 as a result of the policies of the government of the day at the time: the Conservative government, when they were in power from 1995 to 2003. It began in 1999. From 1999 to 2003—and this one's a beauty—the PC government actually added to the stranded debt. It rose by \$1 billion over those four years, from \$19.4 billion to \$20.5 billion.

I know it went up by \$1 billion in those four years, but what I don't know is how much you collected during those four years—but you did collect, because you put the debt retirement charge on people's bills in 1999. So not only were you collecting for four years the charge that you instituted, but the debt went up in those four years; it didn't go down. It went up by \$1 billion. Where did the money you collected in those four years go? The debt didn't go down while you were collecting it; it went up. Contrast that to our government: The debt's been going down by about \$1 billion a year over the last six years.

The stranded debt is currently \$5.7 billion lower than it was in 2003. By paying down \$5.7 billion, we're saving the taxpayers of the province of Ontario \$408 million a year in interest expense. I don't know how

much was costed to us by the former government when they let the debt increase even while they were collecting the debt retirement charge. I don't know where that money went. I would sure like to know. The Ontario Electricity Financial Corp. is projecting the debt to be paid down by another \$1 billion this fiscal year.

1740

To summarize: To date, \$7.8 billion has been collected under the debt retirement charge, and \$5.7 billion has been used to pay down the principal. Those are numbers that I haven't heard anybody dispute. They sound like they're beyond the point of debate.

There are costs associated with some of the things that we're doing on energy. Nobody on this side of the House has ever disputed that.

Just this morning, I had the opportunity, in my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan, along with my colleague Michael Gravelle, to make a tremendous announcement, an announcement that was committed to by all three political parties in the 2003 election; that is, that they would all go off coal. All three parties said it: Ernie Eves, the leader of the PCs, said it; Howard Hampton, when he was the leader of the NDP, said it; and our leader, Dalton McGuinty, said it. And we're doing it: five coal plants in the province of Ontario; two of them were in my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

In August just past, I had the great pleasure of announcing that the Atikokan generating station will be converted to biomass, creating construction jobs, saving 100 jobs in that plant, saving 40% of the municipal tax base for the town of Atikokan, and on it goes, potentially creating another wood products industry in northwestern Ontario as a result of that decision. We did that—the first plant to be converted to biomass, I believe it's fair to say, in the history of the province of Ontario. That was the first one in my riding that we converted. Everybody said they were going to consider doing it. We've done it. That costs some money. Are they telling me over there that they don't want to do that?

Then, this morning in Thunder Bay, the second coal-fired generating station that's in my riding: My colleague Michael Gravelle and I announced this morning that the Thunder Bay generating station will be converted to natural gas. We're going to save both those plants.

Both of those are things that I'm very proud of. I'm very proud of having accomplished that in the riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan. It's going to save a lot of jobs, it's going to save a lot of tax base, it's going to create a lot of construction jobs, and that list goes on.

Are the people across the aisle telling me that they're not interested in that? Remember, in 2003 you committed to it, your party committed to it. There's a cost associated with it. Are you going to roll back on it? Are you going to say you don't support it now?

I heard my colleagues speaking earlier. At some point, somebody please tell me what kind of generation you're interested in. You don't like nuclear. You don't like wind. You don't like solar. You don't like hydraulic. I don't know what it is you like. You say gas is too expensive. You've got to pick something.

From 1990 to 1995—everybody has a record—under the NDP, it went up by 40% in five years. They cancelled conservation programs. They didn't replace it with anything. They cancelled Conawapa, a great deal from Manitoba that was set up by the David Peterson government in the late 1980s. We would have had energy at four cents a click forever. They got rid of it. As well, the Conservatives artificially capped the price of power in 2002, I believe it was, at 4.3 cents, and the Conservatives hid the true cost of that energy in the debt retirement charge, the very thing that we find ourselves speaking about today.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Randy Hillier: I think it's important, after listening to the Liberal members, that we cut through all the Liberal BS that we've heard from these guys today.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I ask you to withdraw that.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I withdraw.

It's plain to be seen by everyone how valuable this opposition day motion is. We're looking to have the current balance and the amount paid of the residual stranded debt put on the bill of hydro consumers so that they know what it is that they're paying, how much they're paying and how much this Liberal government is either paying or not paying off the debt. This is very simple, very clear.

I know the member from Ottawa west, the president of the Liberal Party, has a little problem. I think he mentioned that hydro was complicated and they were having difficulties with this.

This is not a complicated procedure. Put down how much is owed, how much has been received and what the remaining debt is. Let's just get the facts clear. This Liberal government has collected \$7.8 billion from the consumers of this province to pay off a debt of \$7.8 billion, and they refuse to say if they've paid any of that debt off. We've asked them questions every day for the last week or two and they refuse to answer the question.

Why is that? Why do they refuse to answer the question? I would imagine we would find the answer here in the Liberal Renewable Energy Matters—Campaign Outline, developed by Sussex Strategy. It's marked "Privileged and confidential," but right there on page 1 of their renewable energy campaign, it says, "In this, it will be critical to 'confuse' the issue in the political/public/media" arenas "away from just price...." This is intentional, what they're doing. This is why they are blocking this motion. They are speaking and opposing it because they are attempting to confuse the people of this province on what they're actually doing with that money—and that is the question: Where is the money? You've collected \$7.8 billion and nobody knows where it went. All we do know is that this debt that was due to be paid off in full in 2012 is now expected to be paid off in 2018—if we can believe what these guys are saying, even though their strategy is to confuse.

Who believes them? Nobody. That's \$7.8 billion, and what do the taxpayers and the ratepayers of Ontario get for it? A big goose egg. That's what Ontario ratepayers have gotten from this Liberal government: nothing.

But maybe others have. Look at what's happened at Hydro One. In 2003, there were 1,300 people making over \$100,000; in 2009, there are now 2,584 people making over \$100,000. And how about the OEB, the Ontario Energy Board? In 2003, six people made over \$100,000 at that agency; last year they had 96 people making over \$100,000—from six to 96. The Ontario Power Authority went from six people making \$100,000 in 2005, and in 2009, that number went up to 75, a twelvefold increase.

We have seen decades of mismanagement of Ontario Hydro. That is clear. Everybody in this province knows that it has gone on for decades and decades. But what we're not used to is this government, the government of the people of Ontario, hiding \$7.8 billion. We can understand the mismanagement at Ontario Hydro, but for elected representatives not to come clean and tell the people what they're doing with their money is just unacceptable. That is nothing but skulduggery, that is nothing but odoriferous, noisome reports coming out of this, and it is, like I said at the very beginning—that I had to withdraw, and I can't say that word.

But the member from Welland put it clearly. He talked about what this Liberal government is doing: \$7.8 billion and the people of Ontario get nothing from them. We want to see the current balance and the amount paid on the hydro bills of the people of Ontario, just like they would get on a mortgage statement from their bank. If any bank conducted themselves like this Liberal government, they would be up on fraud charges for failing to disclose how much had been paid on mortgage accounts. That's what you guys are doing. It is a criminal action.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I'd ask you to withdraw.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. Miller, Parry Sound–Muskoka, has moved opposition day motion number 5. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion, say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1750 to 1800.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): All those in favour, please rise one at a time until recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Jones, Sylvia	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bailey, Robert	Klees, Frank	Savoline, Joyce
Barrett, Toby	Kormos, Peter	Shurman, Peter
Dunlop, Garfield	MacLeod, Lisa	Sterling, Norman W.
Elliott, Christine	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Paul	Witmer, Elizabeth
Hillier, Randy	O'Toole, John	Yakubuski, John

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): All those opposed, please rise one at a time until recorded by the Clerk.

Nays

Albanese, Laura	Dhillon, Vic	Meilleur, Madeleine
Arthurs, Wayne	Dickson, Joe	Milloy, John
Balkissoon, Bas	Fonseca, Peter	Naqvi, Yasir
Bartolucci, Rick	Gerretsen, John	Pendergast, Leeanna
Bradley, James J.	Gravelle, Michael	Phillips, Gerry
Brotten, Laurel C.	Hoskins, Eric	Pupatello, Sandra
Brown, Michael A.	Jaczek, Helena	Ramal, Khalil
Brownell, Jim	Jeffrey, Linda	Ramsay, David
Cansfield, Donna H.	Johnson, Rick	Rinaldi, Lou
Caplan, David	Kular, Kuldip	Ruprecht, Tony
Carroll, Aileen	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sandals, Liz
Chan, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Smith, Monique
Chiarelli, Bob	Matthews, Deborah	Van Bommel, Maria
Colle, Mike	Mauro, Bill	Wilkinson, John
Cozier, Bruce	McMeekin, Ted	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Delaney, Bob	McNeely, Phil	Zimmer, David

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 21; the nays are 48.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I declare the motion lost.

Motion negatived.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

GROWTH PLANNING

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Simcoe North has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given yesterday by the Minister of Infrastructure. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I filed this late show because I was very offended with the answer given by the Minister of Infrastructure on my question last Thursday, starting out by saying something to the effect of, what alarm clock did I turn on to wake up to this problem?

I can tell you right now, I've been member of county council, I've been a citizen of Simcoe county, and I'm very, very concerned about the future of Simcoe county and the 20-year plan. In fact, I've voiced opposition a number of times to the IGAP plan and now the Simcoe growth plan. Even at the Barrie-Innisfil annexation hearings, I made sure that as many mayors as I possibly could got out to those hearings. I wanted them to voice their concerns with the growth plan at that time, and that goes back to last year.

However, what I wanted to point out clearly about the amendment is that the minister made the amendment three days after the municipal election. We all know that we're going to have lame-duck municipal councils until at least mid-December, after they're all sworn in and they

can attend their first meeting. We have the Christmas season; we have budgets; we have orientations, and the minister thinks he's done a big deal by giving the municipalities until January 31, 2011, to comment on the amendment.

Just today—I want to make sure I get this on the record—I've talked to a number of the mayors and deputy mayors and council members in Simcoe county: Mike Burkett, the mayor-elect of the township of Severn; Gerry Marshall, the mayor-elect of the town of Penetang; Gordon McKay, the mayor-elect of the town of Midland; Angelo Orsi, the mayor-elect of the city of Orillia—the list goes on and on of municipal council members who are concerned about this deadline. I asked them for an extension of six months so that these councillors could have an orientation. This is a 20-year plan. It will have an impact for the next 20 years, and I think it's safe to say that they're very much onside.

I can tell you what they said today. This is a letter that was just put out to Minister Chiarelli and Minister Bartolucci:

“We cannot stress enough, that the county wants to continue to work with the province on solutions and we do not wish to be adversarial. We do feel, however, that we have been disregarded completely—words such as ‘disrespect’ and ‘total disconnect’ (of communications and roles between various provincial ministries and initiatives) were stated by members of council” today—and that's the last meeting of this county council.

“We are concerned about good planning and growth opportunities being stifled. We are concerned about this region's provincially significant opportunities and infrastructure being lost—due to what has been described by some as nothing more than provincial short-sightedness, bureaucratic influences and a push for policy over reality. Hopefully we will work together to prove them wrong.”

That comes from the county of Simcoe, out of their meeting today, in a letter to the minister.

On top of that, here's a letter from the township of Oro-Medonte from yesterday. “There are a number of factors that have implications on the current deadline for submissions; the new council for Oro-Medonte will not be sworn in until December 1, 2010, and will then require an appropriate transition period in order to be provided the opportunity to be fully engaged with the implications associated with the proposed amendment.”

What I'm saying is, it doesn't necessarily have to be July 31—but at least more time than we're giving. It's completely unreasonable and irresponsible for this government to think that they can put an amendment through and have all the deadlines for consultations done by January 31.

From the floor of county council there were many questions today, but what's more of a concern is, I'm getting the same kind of comments from the development industry, from builders etc., who are wondering what is actually going on with this thing. On top of that, this is the only municipality in the Places to Grow legislation

that has been micromanaged by this ministry—completely irresponsible. They have not been given a fair opportunity.

I can tell you the list will go on and on. I understand there are more and more resolutions coming in over the next couple of days. The minister may want to ignore it, and that's his responsibility, but he shouldn't be taking personal shots at me, which I think was very bad on his part when he made the comments in response to my question last week. He should be caring about the citizens of the county of Simcoe, who have to live with this plan for the next 20 years. This is one of the most beautiful counties in the province. You know how hard I've worked yourself, Madam Chair, on the Lake Simcoe Protection Act; bringing it to the floor of this Legislature, so we could have a meaningful debate on a resolution. I care immensely about what happens, and I care immensely about what happens to the planning in the county of Simcoe.

What I'm going to say in conclusion is, if this government doesn't want to extend that deadline, we'll have to put it through. But I'm going to tell you one thing: When we, the PC government, are elected in this House next October, we will fix their mistakes.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The parliamentary assistant has up to five minutes.

Mr. Rick Johnson: It's a pleasure to rise in the House to respond.

The vibrant communities of Barrie, Orillia and Simcoe county will continue to grow. This growth must be sustainable so that Simcoe county remains healthy and prosperous. That's why on October 28, we released and began consulting on a draft amendment to the growth plan. Our amendment aims to maintain the vitality of the Simcoe area by creating vibrant and complete communities by protecting the environment and by supporting job creation.

1810

The draft amendment would provide more specific direction to guide growth in the Simcoe area, helping address the region's complex growth challenge, for example, by identifying six urban areas or nodes where major growth can be focused, making for more efficient use of infrastructure and limiting urban sprawl; and also by identifying industrial employment areas along Highway 400 and other economic employment districts to support significant local job creation, particularly in manufacturing and industrial activities.

In his question last week, the member claimed that we are not providing enough time for consultation. As Minister Chiarelli stated in response, we held extensive consultations over a two-year period before releasing the proposed amendment. Now we're holding another 90-day consultation on the amendment itself. We're only three weeks into the consultation period, but we've already tracked over 1,200 visits to the proposed amendment Web page, and formal submissions have already begun to flow in. We are also hosting a series of technical briefings in the Simcoe area. More than 85 stakeholders and

residents attended the three sessions we've held so far, and two more are scheduled.

The member would have us extend the consultation period through July, yet Simcoe county residents and municipalities have made it very clear that they want us to move forward to bring this process to its completion and provide certainty to the community.

But let's let municipal representatives speak for themselves. And I might want to mention that a quote was raised about the fact that there have recently been municipal elections. There were only seven new councillors elected in the whole county, so the vast, vast majority of the councillors know exactly what's going on on this.

Michael MacEachern, mayor of New Tecumseth, was quoted in the Simcoe Metroland paper on November 4, 2010: "I am very encouraged by the government's release of the proposed amendment. Acting now will ensure that we grow in a sustainable manner that protects our valuable resources and preserves the quality of life we enjoy in Simcoe county."

On October 28, 2010, Barb Baguley, mayor-elect of Innisfil, told the Toronto Star: "It improves so much of society when people can work locally."

Jeff Lehman, Barrie ward 2 councillor and future mayor of the city of Barrie, said in the Orillia Packet and Times on November 1, 2010: "This is good news as the amendment is consistent with our vision for slower and smarter growth, expanding the number of jobs in Barrie and creating the certainty needed to allow us to proceed for planning new employment areas."

A quote from Cal Patterson, warden of Simcoe county—he was quoted in the Midland Mirror on November 1, 2010: "We are pleased to see that many of the county's comments on the vision paper have been incorporated in the province's proposed amendment."

We'll take our cues from these municipal leaders rather than from the honourable member. He's had his chance to make submissions to this, and before last week, when he asked the question on our Simcoe growth strategy, he had not raised the issue once.

I have met with a number of the councillors personally, including Cal Patterson, warden of Simcoe county. Over the past time, they approached me and asked if there was anything they could do to help out on this. We've had a number of meetings. I was very pleased to have tried to assist this group from Simcoe county, and I look forward to meeting with them again as this process rolls forward.

I thank you for your time.

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

FRENCH-LANGUAGE SERVICES

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Nickel Belt has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given yesterday by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. The member

has up to five minutes to debate the matter and the parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Hier, j'ai demandé une question à la ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée qui me tenait particulièrement à cœur. Malheureusement, à cause de problèmes techniques de traduction, elle n'a pas compris ma question. Je dois dire qu'elle est venue s'en excuser à la première occasion qu'elle a eue, mais tout de même, c'est une question qui demande une réponse.

La question vient d'une longue histoire. Je vais essayer de la faire très courte étant donné le temps que j'ai.

Dans un premier temps, on commence avec la communauté francophone de Peel et Halton. Ces gens-là, depuis la mise en place de la Loi sur les services en français, travaillent à mettre en place un centre de santé communautaire francophone. Ils se sont organisés en corporation, et en 1992, au travers de ce qui était dans le temps le conseil régional de santé, ils ont présenté une demande de financement en bonne et due forme pour un centre de santé communautaire francophone pour desservir la population.

La demande a été refusée. Ils l'ont retravaillée et l'ont resoumise quatre fois. Ils l'ont soumise en 1992, en 1997, en 1998 et en 2001. Ils l'ont également modifiée pour voir si, plutôt que d'avoir un centre de santé communautaire francophone autonome, il pourrait devenir un satellite de ce qu'on appelle maintenant le Centre francophone de Toronto. Cela aussi a été rejeté.

En 2005, ils changent leur fusil d'épaule et font des demandes de financement pour une équipe de santé familiale. Même réponse : on leur répond non. La demande va être refaite, et c'est là que l'histoire s'embrouille encore plus.

Quand la position du commissaire aux services en français a finalement été mise en place, ils ont fait une plainte en bonne et due forme. La plainte a été reçue par le commissaire, elle a été étudiée, et des recommandations claires en sont ressorties. Dans le rapport du commissaire, on peut voir les recommandations qui ont été faites, et je dois dire que certaines—il y a eu de l'action. Entre autres, le commissaire a recommandé qu'on revoie les critères du processus d'évaluation d'une demande d'équipe de soins familiaux, et cela a été fait. Mais la recommandation la plus importante, là où notre commissaire donne une directive claire avec une date butoir, ça, en vérifiant sur le terrain avec les gens qui travaillent encore à mettre sur pied un centre de santé communautaire, un satellite ou une équipe de soins familiaux—il n'y a toujours rien qui a été fait.

J'aimerais vous lire un extrait de ce que le commissaire aux services en français a écrit. « Le commissaire recommande que le ministère reconnaisse sans équivoque sa responsabilité ultime, que présentement ces services ne sont pas offerts et que la responsabilité de trouver des solutions à cette situation n'incombe pas uniquement à la communauté. » Ce sont quand même des mots clairs et des mots assez fermes.

Recommandation numéro 3—et ça, c'était ma question : « Le commissaire recommande que le

ministère, en collaboration avec les deux RLISS, développe et propose à la communauté francophone de Peel et Halton des modèles pratiques et concrets de prestations de services de santé en français et que ces derniers puissent être mis en place avant la fin de l'année 2010. »

Ma question à la ministre était toute simple. Vous avez une directive du commissaire aux services en français qui vous dit de proposer à la communauté francophone de Peel et Halton des modèles pratiques, et vous devez le faire avant la fin de l'année 2010. Nous sommes présentement le 23 novembre. Je suis forte en maths; ça veut dire qu'il reste 38 jours. Hier, quand j'ai posé ma question, il en restait 39. J'ai donc demandé à la ministre : « Il vous reste 39 jours, madame la Ministre. Quand est-ce qu'on va finalement voir que vous respectez une directive du commissaire aux services en français de donner à la communauté francophone—de proposer des modèles pratiques et concrets? »

Non seulement que c'est important pour les gens de Peel et Halton, mais ce n'est pas souvent que notre commissaire émet une directive aussi claire avec une date butoir. Ça ne fait pas longtemps qu'on l'a, notre commissaire. On est bien content qu'il soit là. Mais si, à la première occasion, il donne une directive claire et la ministre l'ignore complètement, bien, on piétine; on aura fait tout ça pour rien. Merci.

M. Phil McNeely: Je suis heureux de répondre de façon plus détaillée à la question posée hier par ma collègue la députée France Gélinas concernant un rapport du Commissariat aux services en français au sujet des services en français dans la région de Peel et de Halton. Je tiens à assurer cette Chambre que notre gouvernement est fermement déterminé à assurer un accès à des services de santé en français pour les francophones. Nous avons adopté des mesures concrètes pour réaliser cet engagement.

Nous prenons les recommandations du commissaire aux services en français très au sérieux et nous travaillons à l'amélioration des services dans Peel-Halton. Notre gouvernement a accordé 320 000 \$ au Centre de services de santé Peel et Halton pour la mise au point de modèles de prestation de services de soins primaires culturellement appropriés. Ce projet, qui s'échelonne sur deux ans, prendra fin le printemps prochain. Le ministère examinera et évaluera ensuite les résultats et le potentiel de services.

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Le ministère travaille aussi activement à l'élaboration d'options visant à offrir des soins primaires dans la région de Peel-Halton qui répondent aux besoins d'une population francophone urbaine.

À l'occasion du récent appel de propositions de la cinquième vague portant sur la mise sur pied de 30 nouvelles équipes de santé familiale, le ministère a modifié les critères de sélection afin d'inclure la prestation de services en français. Je suis fier de dire que, sur les 30 nouvelles équipes de santé familiale qui ont été annoncées, 17, soit plus de la moitié, appuient l'engage-

ment de notre gouvernement à fournir des services en français.

Nous avons adopté une loi qui reflète encore davantage notre engagement en matière de services de santé en français. La Loi de 2006 sur l'intégration du système de santé local comprend une disposition qui respecte les besoins de la communauté francophone de l'Ontario en établissant le Conseil consultatif des services de santé en français, qui est chargé de conseiller la ministre sur les services en français. Cette année, nous avons travaillé très étroitement avec notre conseil afin d'établir et d'améliorer les services en français.

La loi prévoit également la création d'entités locales de planification afin d'assurer la participation directe de la communauté francophone.

Notre gouvernement donne suite à son engagement de mettre sur pied des entités de planification des services de santé en français. En juillet, nous avons annoncé la création de deux entités, l'une desservant les RLISS du Sud-Ouest et de Champlain, et l'autre desservant le Nord.

Le Réseau des services de santé en français de l'Est de l'Ontario a été désigné en juin comme l'entité de planification des services de santé en français des réseaux locaux d'intégration des services de santé (RLISS) de Champlain et du Sud-Ouest, et le Réseau du mieux-être francophone du Nord de l'Ontario comme l'entité de planification des services de santé en français des RLISS du Nord-Est et du Nord-Ouest.

Les RLISS et les entités établiront une entente de responsabilisation qui régira leurs relations de travail. L'entente servira de base à la négociation d'ententes locales qui énonceront les modalités de financement et de reddition de comptes.

Une fois que toutes les nouvelles entités de planification des services de santé en français auront été mises sur pied, elles joueront un rôle crucial en travaillant avec les RLISS pour améliorer les services dans les collectivités locales.

Tous les RLISS pourront compter sur un coordonnateur des services en français, une fois que la mise en œuvre de l'initiative sera terminée, en décembre 2010. Ces personnes appuieront le RLISS en matière de services en français.

De plus, notre gouvernement continue d'appuyer une variété d'initiatives touchant les services en français, comme les services de traduction et les nouvelles initiatives de recherche liées à la prestation des services de santé en français.

Je suis ravi de signaler que des progrès importants ont été réalisés à cet égard, notamment:

—la désignation de deux entités de planification des services de santé en français et la poursuite du travail afin de désigner les quatre autres, comme je l'ai indiqué précédemment;

—l'établissement d'un groupe de travail sur la gouvernance, composé des entités de planification des services de santé en français et des RLISS, qui est chargé d'approuver le modèle d'entente de responsabilisation qui encadrera les relations de travail entre les nouvelles

entités de planification des services de santé en français et les RLISS;

—la négociation avec l'Association des centres d'accès aux soins communautaires de l'Ontario visant la création d'une composante de langue française à son service « d'aiguillage » et d'information;

—la mise au point d'initiatives de recherche du ministère afin d'appuyer le travail lié aux politiques et aux programmes; et

—le renforcement de la capacité des organismes gouvernementaux en matière de services en français.

Je suis fier de l'engagement de notre gouvernement envers la population francophone de l'Ontario et de nos mesures concrètes visant à réaliser cet engagement.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you.

CELLPHONES

TÉLÉPHONES CELLULAIRES

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Nickel Belt has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given today by the Minister of Health Promotion and Sport. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

The member for Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: This morning I had the pleasure to have a conversation with a very interesting person: Dr. Devra Davis. She is a world-renowned, award-winning scientist and author, and an expert on the health risks of cellphone radiation. She was in Ontario. She offered to meet with me, which I did. She is full of very interesting statistics and knowledge, basically. She had extended the same invitation to the Minister of Health Promotion and Sport, but the minister declined. When I asked her why she declined, why she is not open to looking at the ever-growing body of scientific evidence that clearly makes the link between the use of cellphones and the development of cancer, she basically brushed it off and then she went a step further. She quoted somebody I have tremendous respect for, our chief medical officer of health, Dr. King. She quoted from a letter that Dr. King has written to me, as well as all Ontarians. Let me read the quote. I'm quoting from Hansard.

"Hon. Margaret Best: It's a pleasure for me to rise.... I want to, again, refer this member to the chief medical officer of health, our expert, 'I want to assure Ontarians that there is no established causal link between the use of wireless communication systems'"—and then the Minister of Health Promotion adds—"including cellphones, and adverse effects on human health."

The quote is incorrect. The quote from our chief medical officer of health does not say anything about cellphones; it talks about Wi-Fi, and I agree. The chief medical officer of health brought forward her report. I think the date was September 16. The report is extensive. It always brings forward the same high-quality investigation that Dr. King brings to this legislation and shows

clearly that there is no link between Wi-Fi and ill effects, but Dr. King does not say anything about cellphones. Only the minister added that into the quote, which does not exist. The quote is wrong.

So, to me, it's really weird that, first of all, our Minister of Health Promotion is ignoring the findings of her own agency, because the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion says—and I will quote from that, and anybody can go on the website and see—“There is emerging evidence that long-term frequent use of cellphones may be associated with an increased risk of tumours on the side of the head where the cellphone is used.” This is on page 7 of their report.

This report is on the website of the Minister of Health Promotion and Sport, yet the minister continues to say that there is no evidence that there is a risk to health from cellphones. She doesn't listen to her own agency. She doesn't listen to what the public health unit in Toronto has to say. More and more jurisdictions are starting to act upon this to try to protect people.

My bill is very simple: Put out a warning. The cellphone company already tells you that there's a health risk. If you have the same BlackBerry I do, go on page 42 of the manual, which is printed so small that you can't read it, but if you're ever able to read it, on page 42 and it goes on to page 43, you will see that they do tell you that there is a health risk and that you should keep this device at least an inch away from your body. It's the same thing if you use an iPhone. We have checked, and all of the manuals have them. All I'm asking is, take that information that is buried in a document that nobody uses and put it on cellphones so that people can use it to protect themselves.

But it gets even weirder because in her response she says that parents have a role to play to protect their children from cellphones, but then she says there's no risk with cellphones. You can't have it both ways, and you can't quote our chief medical officer of health as saying something that she never said. That's why I'm dissatisfied.

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: En tant qu'adjoint parlementaire au ministère de la Promotion de la santé et du Sport, il me fait plaisir de répondre à la députée, une députée pour qui j'ai beaucoup de respect pour son travail et surtout pour le rôle qu'elle joue dans l'organisation de l'APF.

I want to again reiterate that this government takes the health of all Ontarians very seriously, in particular, the health of Ontario's children.

Je veux souligner que ce gouvernement prend la santé des Ontariens et des Ontariennes très sérieusement, et en particulier la santé de nos enfants.

Cellphone signals, or more specifically, the concerns over the safety of being exposed to radio frequency radiation emitted from cellphones, have been addressed in this House before and in specific studies the ministry

uses to assess public concerns. I want the member to understand that this ministry takes advice from doctors and scientists on significant matters such as this.

Je veux que la députée comprenne que le ministère prend en considération des avis médicaux.

“To date, no adverse health effects have been established for mobile phone use.” The WHO goes on to say, “To date, research does not suggest any consistent evidence of adverse health effects from exposure to radio frequency fields at levels below those that cause tissue heating. Further, research has not been able to provide support for a ... relationship between exposure to electromagnetic fields and self-reported symptoms, or ‘electromagnetic hypersensitivity.’”

The member opposite has even tried to use a recent report from the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion on mobile phone use in an attempt to push her own agenda forward. In doing so, the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion had to send out a media release saying that the member for Nickel Belt misrepresented the conclusion of the report she cited as her rationale. In the OAHPP media release, Dr. Vivek Goel, the organization's CEO, said, “The bottom line is there is no evidence to provide a basis for recommending changes to policy regarding cellphones.”

Finally, as I said at the outset, we take our advice from doctors and scientists. More importantly, we trust the knowledge of our own experts such as the chief medical officer of health for the province of Ontario. As per a quote from Dr. King, the chief medical officer of health of Ontario: “I want to assure Ontarians that there is no established ... link between the use of wireless communication systems, including cellphones and adverse effects on human health.”

The Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion also recently completed a review of published scientific studies and reports produced by credible national and international public health agencies on a similar RF-based technology, and this review noted that evidence to support a causal relationship between cellphone use and tumours is lacking.

Health Canada and other national and international organizations have developed standards and guidelines to protect the public from adverse effects of radio frequency energy. Along with other public health experts in Ontario, they continue to monitor any new information on radio frequency energy relevant to the protection of public health and be sure that this is brought to the attention of the appropriate standards-setting organizations.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): This concludes the late shows. This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1834.

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Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion and Sport / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé et du Sport
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Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
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Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
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Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB) Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)	Oakville Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP) Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Nickel Belt Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP) Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Kenora–Rainy River Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB) Hudak, Tim (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB) Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB) Jones, Sylvia (PC) Klees, Frank (PC) Kormos, Peter (NDP) Kular, Kuldip (LIB) Kwinter, Monte (LIB) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB) Leal, Jeff (LIB) Levac, Dave (LIB) MacLeod, Lisa (PC) Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock Dufferin–Caledon Newmarket–Aurora Welland Bramalea–Gore–Malton York Centre / York-Centre Glengarry–Prescott–Russell Peterborough Brant Nepean–Carleton Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Marchese, Rosario (NDP) Martiniuk, Gerry (PC) Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina Cambridge London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB) McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB) Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound–Muskoka Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Moridi, Reza (LIB) Munro, Julia (PC)	Richmond Hill York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murdoch, Bill (PC) Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R (LIB)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB) O'Toole, John (PC) Oraziotti, David (LIB) Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC) Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB) Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB) Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre Durham Sault Ste. Marie Oshawa Kitchener–Conestoga Elgin–Middlesex–London Scarborough–Agincourt	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP) Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)	Beaches–East York Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB) Ramal, Khalil (LIB) Ramsay, David (LIB) Rinaldi, Lou (LIB) Ruprecht, Tony (LIB) Sandals, Liz (LIB) Savoline, Joyce (PC) Sergio, Mario (LIB) Shurman, Peter (PC) Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord London–Fanshawe Timiskaming–Cochrane Northumberland–Quinte West Davenport Guelph Burlington York West / York-Ouest Thornhill Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB) Sousa, Charles (LIB) Sterling, Norman W. (PC) Tabuns, Peter (NDP) Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Vaughan Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud Carleton–Mississippi Mills Toronto–Danforth Mississauga–Erindale	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB) Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) Wilson, Jim (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex Perth–Wellington Simcoe–Grey	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC) Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB) Yakabuski, John (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

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Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson
Jim Brownell, Kim Craiton
Bob Delaney, Garfield Dunlop
Phil McNeely, John O'Toole
Maria Van Bommel
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

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Peter Shurman, Norman W. Sterling
David Zimmer
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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin
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